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WASHINGTON, D. C.

# HISTORY

OF

CHARLES THE TWELFTH,

KING OF SWEDEN.

*François Marie Artois*  
BY M. DE VOLTAIRE.

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A NEW TRANSLATION, FROM THE LAST PARIS EDITION.



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# PREFACE

TO THE

**EDITION OF MDCCL.**

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INCREDULITY, says Aristotle, is the source of all wisdom. This maxim is exceedingly proper for all who read history, and ancient history in particular.

How many absurd facts! How many fables shocking to common sense! What then? Do not believe a word of them.

There were kings, consuls, and decemvirs in Rome; the Roman people destroyed Carthage; Cæsar conquered Pompey; these are all truths: but when you are told that Castor and Pollux fought for them; that a vestal with her girdle set afloat a stranded vessel; that an abyss closed as soon as Curtius had thrown himself into it—do not believe a word of it. You read every where of prodigies; of predictions accomplished; and of miraculous cures performed in the temples of Esculapius—do not believe a word of them. But a hundred witnesses have signed the verbal process of these miracles upon brazen tables! and the temples were filled with votive tablets which attest the cures!

Believe they were fools and knaves who attested what they never saw; believe they were devotees who made presents to the priests of Esculapius as often as their children were cured of a cold; but of the miracles of this god, do not believe one word.

But the Egyptian priests were all sorcerers, and Herodotus admires their profound science in Demonism! Do not believe a word of it. Herodotus had his information from their own mouths.

I shall always distrust whatever is marvellous; but ought I to carry my incredulity so far as to doubt facts, which are in the common order of human events, because they are deficient in moral probability? For example, Plutarch assures us, that Cæsar in complete armour threw himself into the sea of Alexandria, holding in the air, with one hand, papers

which he wished to keep dry, and swimming with the other. Do not believe a word of this story of Plutarch's; rather believe Cæsar himself, who says not a word of it in his Commentaries; and be sure that when a person throws himself into the sea, and has papers in his hand, that he will wet them.

You will find in Quintus Curtius, that Alexander and his generals were perfectly astonished when they beheld the flux and reflux of the ocean, which they did not expect. Don't believe a word of it. It is exceedingly probable that Alexander, when he was drunk, killed Clytus; that he loved Hephæstion as Socrates did Alcibiades: but it is not at all likely that the pupil of Aristotle should be ignorant of the flux and reflux of the ocean. There were philosophers in his army; it was sufficient to have been upon the Euphrates, at the mouth of which there are tides, to have been acquainted with this phenomenon. Alexander had travelled in Africa, the coasts of which are washed by the ocean. Could his admiral, Nearchus, be so ignorant as not to know what was known to every child upon the banks of the river Indus? Such nonsense repeated by so many writers throws too much discredit upon historians.

Father Maimbourg copies from a hundred other writers, a story of two Jews having promised the empire to Leo Isauricus, upon condition that when he was emperor, he should pull down the images. What interest had these two Jews to hinder Christians from having pictures? How could these two wretches promise the empire? Is it not insulting the reader to present him with such fables?

It must be allowed that Mezeray, in his hard, low and unequal manner, together with ill-digested facts, relates many absurdities as great as those we have mentioned. He tells us that Henry Vth of England, who was crowned king of France at Paris, died of the piles for having sat down upon the throne of our kings; and gravely relates the appearance of St. Michael to Joan of Arc.

I do not even believe ocular witnesses when they tell me things repugnant to common sense. The Sieur de Joinville, or rather his translator, assures me in vain that the Emirs of Egypt, after having assassinated their Sultan, offered the crown to St. Louis their prisoner. I could as soon believe that we had offered the crown of France to a Turk. What probability is there, that the Mahometans should have thought of making that man their sovereign, whom they could not



consider in any other light than as a leader of barbarians whom they had taken in battle, that could not be acquainted with their laws or their language, and who was the capital enemy of their religion? Nor can I give him greater credit, when he tells us, that the Nile overflowed at the feast of Saint Remy in the beginning of October. I shall dispute with equal boldness the history of the Old Man of the Mountain, who, upon the news of St. Louis's crusade, despatched two assassins to kill him, and next day, upon hearing of his virtue, sent off two couriers to countermand them. This has too much the air of an *Arabian tale*.

There is nothing certainly more probable than that crimes have been committed, but none should be related that cannot be proved. We find in Mezeray, accounts of more than sixty princes "WHO HAVE SWALLOWED A MOUTHFUL;" but he adduces no proof, and a popular report should only be held as a report.

I will not believe even Livy, when he tells me that Pyrrhus's physician offered to the Romans to poison his master for a bribe. The Romans had scarce begun to coin money, and Pyrrhus could have bought the republic, if it would have set itself to sale. The place of first physician to Pyrrhus was probably more lucrative than that of consul. I will not believe this story, till it has been proved to me that some first physician of one of our kings has asked one of the Swiss cantons to pay him for poisoning his patient.

Let us equally mistrust whatever appears exaggerated. An innumerable army of Persians impeded by three hundred Spartans at the pass of Thermopylæ, does not stagger my belief. The nature and disposition of the country render such an event credible. That Charles XII., with eight thousand veterans, defeated at Narva about four score thousand ill armed Muscovite peasants, though it astonishes me, yet I believe it; but when I read that Symon de Montfort, with nine hundred soldiers in three bodies, routed an army of a hundred thousand men, I must loudly express my infidelity. I am told it is a miracle; but is it likely that God has worked this miracle for Symon de Montfort?

I should doubtless call in question the combat of Charles XII. at Bender, but that the truth of it has been attested to me by several ocular witnesses, and the character of Charles XII. renders probable this heroical extravagance. This mistrust which we ought to entertain for particular facts, let us exercise also in regard to the manners of foreign nations.

Let us refuse our confidence to every historian, ancient and modern, who relates to us things contrary to the nature and turn of the human heart.

All the first accounts of America talked only of man-eaters. It seemed, according to them, that the Americans eat men as commonly as we do sheep. This fact, better ascertained, dwindles into a small number of prisoners who have been devoured by their conquerors instead of the worms.

The ancients, and their innumerable and credulous compilers, repeat to us incessantly, that at Babylon, the best policed city in the universe, all the women and girls prostituted themselves once a year in the temple of Venus. I have no difficulty in believing, that at Babylon, as well as elsewhere, pleasure was to be purchased with money; but I can never persuade myself, that in the best policed city which was then in the universe, every father and every husband should send his wife and his daughters to a market of public prostitution, and that legislators should command this extraordinary commerce. Every day a thousand equal absurdities are published respecting the manners of the east; and, for one traveller like Chardin, how many have we like Paul Lucas!

A Greek monk, a Latin monk, writes, that Mahomet the Second delivered the city of Constantinople over to pillage, that he broke with his own hand the images of Jesus Christ, and that he turned all the churches into mosques. To render this conqueror more hateful, they add, that he cut off the head of his mistress to please his janissaries, and that he cut up the bellies of fourteen of his pages to find which of them had eaten a melon. A hundred historians copy these miserable fables, and the dictionaries of Europe repeat them. Consult the real annals of Turkey, compiled by Prince Cantemira, you will see how ridiculous are all these lies. You will learn that the great Mahomet the second, having taken one half of the city of Constantinople by assault, deigned to capitulate with the other, and preserved the churches; that he created a Greek patriarch, to whom he granted greater honours than the Greek emperors had ever given to the predecessors of that bishop. In short, consult common sense, and you will judge how ridiculous it is to suppose that a great monarch, learned, and even polite as Mahomet the Second was, should eviscerate fourteen pages for a melon; and if you are ever so little informed of the manners of the Turks, you will see how extravagant it is to imagine that the

soldiers should concern themselves with what passes between the sultan and his women, and that an emperor should cut off the head of his favourite to please them. It is thus, however, that the greater part of history is written.

It is not so with the history of Charles XII. I can affirm, that if ever any history was entitled to belief, this is. I composed it originally (as is known) from the memoirs of Mons. Fabricius, of Messrs. de Fierville and de Villelongue, and from the testimony of many ocular witnesses. But as witnesses do not see all, and as sometimes they see wrong, I fell into more than one mistake, not only with regard to material facts, but also in the relation of some anecdotes, which in themselves are indifferent, but which furnish matter of triumph to contemptible critics.

I have even made use of the history written by Norberg, chaplain and confessor to Charles XII., although it is a work very ill digested and very ill written, replete with trifling facts foreign to the subject, and which sets the most important events in the most trifling light. It is in fact a mere tissue of rescripts, declarations, and publications which are usually made in the name of kings when they are at war, but which never serve to lay open the true state of affairs. They are useless to the politician and the soldier, and tiresome to the reader. A writer may consult them sometimes only in a case of necessity, for information, just as an architect may employ the old rubbish in a building.

Among the public pieces with which Norberg has loaded his wretched history, there are to be found many which are suppositious and absurd; such as the letter of Achmet, emperor of the Turks, whom that historian calls sultan bashaw by the grace of God.\*

This same Norberg makes the king of Sweden say that which he neither said or could have said relative to King Stanislaus. He pretends that Charles XII., in answer to the objections of the primate, told him, that Stanislaus had made many friends during his journey to Italy; although it is certain that Stanislaus was never in Italy, as it is confirmed by the testimony of that monarch himself.

Norberg had neither understanding, wit, nor acquaintance with the affairs of the world, and this is probably what determined Charles XII. to choose him for his confessor. I do

A2 \* See the letter of M. Voltaire to M. Norberg.



not think he has set his prince in the light even of a good christian, but most assuredly he has not made him a hero. Charles XII. would, ere this, have been forgotten, had he none other than Norberg to preserve his name from oblivion.

It is proper to remark in this place, that there was published a few years since, a small pamphlet, entitled, "Historical and critical remarks upon the history of Charles XII. by M. de Voltaire." This little work is Count Poniatowsky's. It consists of answers he had given to fresh questions on my part during his late journey to Paris, but his secretary having taken a double copy of it, it fell into a bookseller's hands who did not fail to print it, and the corrector of the press in Holland entitled Mr. Poniatowsky's information "a Critique," to sell it the better. This is one of the most trifling frauds which are practised in that trade.

La Mottray, a servant of Monsieur Fabricius, has also printed some remarks upon this history. Amidst the mistakes and the frivolousness with which this critique of La Mottray abounds, there is, notwithstanding, something both useful and true, and I have taken care to profit by it in the later editions, and especially in this; for in writing history nothing must be despised; we must consult, if we have the opportunity, both kings and valets-de-chambres

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## DISSERTATION

ON THE

# HISTORY OF CHARLES XII.

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**THERE** are very few sovereigns whose history ought to have been written apart. In vain have flattery and malignity exerted themselves for almost every prince. There is but a very small number of them whose memory we preserve, and this number would be still smaller if we remembered only such as were virtuous.

The princes that have the best claim to immortality are they who have done some good to mankind; thus, as long as France shall endure, it will remember the affection of Louis the Twelfth for his people. The great faults of Francis the First will be forgiven for the sake of the arts and sciences of which he was the father. Blest will be the memory of Henry the Fourth, who conquered his inheritance first by his valour and then by his clemency. The magnificence of Louis the Fourteenth will be applauded, who protected the arts which Francis had called into existence.

For a contrary reason, we preserve the memory of bad princes, as we record fires, plagues, and inundations.

Conquerors are a species between good kings and tyrants, but partake most of the latter, and have a glaring reputation. We are eager to know the most minute circumstances of their lives. Such is the miserable weakness of mankind, that they look with admiration upon persons glorious for mischief, and are better pleased to be talking of the destroyer than the founder of an empire.

As for those princes who have made no figure either in peace or war—who have neither been remarkable for great virtues nor vices—their lives furnish so little matter either for imitation or instruction, that they are not worthy of notice. Of so many emperors of Rome, Greece, Germany,

and Muscovy—of so many sultans, caliphs, popes, and kings—how few are there whose names deserve to be recorded any where but in chronological tables, where they are of no other use but to mark the EPOCHAS !

There is a **VULGAR** among princes as well as among the rest of mankind ; yet such is the itch of writing, that a prince is no sooner dead, but the world is immediately deluged with volumes under the name of memoirs, the history of his life, or the anecdotes of his court. By these means books have been so multiplied, that were a man to live a hundred years, and employ them all in reading, he would not be able to run over all that has been published relating to the history of Europe for the last two centuries.

This desire of transmitting such useless stories to posterity, and of fixing the attention of future ages upon the most common events, is owing to the weakness of those who have long lived in some court, and have had the misfortune to bear any part in public affairs. They think the court they have lived in the finest, their king the greatest, and the affairs they have been concerned in the most important that ever were ; and they imagine posterity will behold them in the same light.

If a prince has had wars abroad, troubles or intrigues at home ; if he buys the friendship of his neighbours, or sells his own ; if, after some victories and some defeats, he makes peace with his enemies ; his subjects, heated with the quick succession of these events, think they were born in the most marvellous era since the creation. And what then ? This prince dies ; new measures are taken ; the intrigues of his court, his mistresses, ministers, generals, wars, nay, he himself, is forgotten.

Ever since Christian princes have been endeavouring to outwit one another, making sometimes peace, sometimes war, they have signed thousands of treaties, and fought as many battles, and the great and the infamous actions which have been done are innumerable. Yet should this heap of events and details be transmitted to posterity, they would most of them confound and destroy each other, and the memory of those only would survive, which have occasioned great revolutions, or which having been related by good authors, are preserved like pictures of obscure persons, only because they were drawn by a masterly hand.

A particular history of Charles the Twelfth of Sweden had not increased this public grievance, were it not that he and his rival, Peter Alexiowitz, a much greater man than himself, have been, by the confession of all the world, the most extraordinary personages that have appeared for more than twenty centuries. Yet was not the trifling satisfaction of relating extraordinary actions the sole motive for writing this life ; it was suspected that its perusal might become advantageous to princes, if this



book should by chance fall into their hands. Certainly there is no sovereign who, by the study of the history of Charles XII., ought not to be cured of the madness of conquering; for where is the sovereign who can say, I have greater courage, more virtues, more resolution, more strength of body, greater skill in war, or better troops, than Charles the Twelfth? If, with all these favourable circumstances, and after so many victories, he was so unfortunate, what may other princes expect, who shall have as much ambition, with less talents and fewer resources?

This history is composed from the relations of some persons of distinction, who have spent several years with Charles the Twelfth, and Peter the Great, Emperor of Muscovy; and having retired long after the death of those princes to a free country, have no interest in disguising the truth.

Monsieur Fabricius, who lived seven years in intimacy with Charles XII., Mons. de Fierville, minister from France, Mons. de Villelongue, colonel in the Swedish service, Mons. Poniatowsky himself, have furnished these memoirs.

Not one fact is advanced upon which eye witnesses of irreproachable veracity have not been consulted; which makes the history very different from those GAZETTES which have hitherto come out under the title of Lives of Charles the Twelfth.

Many little skirmishes between the Muscovite and Swedish officers are omitted; for it is the life of the king of Sweden, not his officers, that is here intended to be written; and of his life we have only selected the most important events. We are persuaded that the history of a prince consists not of all he has done worthy to be transmitted to posterity.

It is necessary to observe that many things which were true at the time of writing this history in 1728, were no longer so in 1739. For instance, trade began at that time to be less neglected in Sweden; the Polish infantry was better disciplined, and had a uniform, which it did not wear at the first period. In reading history, we must always consider the time of its writing. A person who should read only the memoirs of the Cardinal de Retz, would take the French nation for a set of enthusiasts, breathing nothing but faction, madness, and civil war. To read the history of the fortunate years of Louis the Fourteenth, one would judge them a people born only for obedience, conquests, and the polite arts. Another, who should see the memoirs of the first years of Louis the Fifteenth, would remark nothing in our nation but its effeminacy, an extreme avidity for wealth, and too much indifference for every thing besides.

The present Spaniards are not the Spaniards of Charles the Fifth, and yet they may deserve that character in a few years. The English of this age no more resemble the fanatics in Cromwell's time, than the

monks and monsignori who fill the streets of Rome are like the ancient Scipios. I doubt whether the Swedish troops could suddenly become so formidable as those of Charles the Twelfth. We say of a man, that he was brave at such a time; and so we may say of a nation, that they were so and so in such a year, or under such an administration.

If any prince or minister of state should meet with disagreeable truths in this book, remember that being public men, they owe an account of their actions to the public; that this is the price with which they purchase their greatness; that history is a witness, and not a flatterer; and that the only way to force men to speak well of us, is to act well.



THE  
HISTORY OF CHARLES XII.  
*KING OF SWEDEN.*

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BOOK I.

**ARGUMENT.**—An abridgment of the History of Sweden, to the reign of Charles XII.—His education.—His enemies.—Character of Czar Peter Alexiowitz.—Curious anecdotes relative to that prince and the Russian nation.—Muscovy, Poland, and Denmark, unite against Charles.

SWEDEN and Finland form a kingdom one third part greater in extent than France, but very inferior to it in fertility, and at this time in population. This country extends nearly from the fifty-fifth to the seventieth degree of north latitude, being in length three, and in breadth two hundred French leagues, and lies under a severe climate, that hath hardly either spring or autumn. Winter prevails there nine months of the year; the heat of summer immediately succeeding to the winter's excessive cold; it beginning to freeze in the month of October, without any of those insensible gradations which in other countries usher in the seasons, and render the variation the more pleasing. Nature, as a compensation, however, has given to this severe climate a serene sky and a pure air. The almost continual heat of the summer's sun produces flowers and fruits in a short time. The tediousness of the long winter nights is alleviated by the morning and evening twilights, which last in proportion as the sun is more or less removed from Sweden. At the same time, the brightness of the moon, which is not obscured by clouds, but increased by the reflection of the snow laying upon the earth, and frequently by the northern lights, renders it as convenient to travel in Sweden by night as by day. The cattle are in this country, through want of pasturage, smaller than those of

the more southern parts of Europe. The men are larger; the serenity of the sky conduces to their health, as the rigour of the climate does to their strength; they live even to a greater age than other men, when not debilitated by the immoderate use of wine and strong liquors, which the northern nations seem to be more immoderately fond of in proportion as they are denied to them by nature.

The Swedes are well made, robust, active, and capable of sustaining the greatest fatigue, hunger, and penury. Born to a military life, full of pride, more brave than industrious, they have long neglected, and even to this day but badly cultivate, the arts of commerce, which only can supply them with what is wanting to their country. It is said to be principally from Sweden, of which one part is still named Gothland, that those multitudes of Goths issued forth, who, like an inundation, overwhelmed Europe, and rent it from the Roman empire, which had for five hundred years been its usurper, its legislator, and its tyrant.

The northern countries were at that time much more populous than at present; not only from their religion affording the inhabitants an opportunity of furnishing the state with a greater number of subjects, by the possession of a plurality of wives; but because the women themselves knew no reproach like that of sterility and idleness; and being as laborious and robust as the men, they attained earlier, and remained longer in the time of fecundity.

Sweden preserved its liberty till the middle of the fourteenth century: for though during so long a period there happened more than one revolution in government, such revolutions turned out constantly in favour of freedom. To its chief magistrate was given the name of king, a title that in different countries has very different degrees of power annexed to it. In France and Spain it signifies an absolute monarch; in Poland, Sweden, and England, the head of the commonwealth. The king of Sweden could do nothing without the senate; and the senate depended upon the states general, which were often convened. The

representatives of the nation in these numerous assemblies, were the gentlemen, bishops, and deputies of the towns; and, in process of time, the peasantry, a class of people unjustly slighted in other nations, and enslaved in almost all the countries of the North.

About the year 1492, this nation, though jealous of its liberty, and boasting even to this day of having conquered Rome thirteen centuries ago, was reduced to slavery by a woman, and a people less powerful than themselves.

Margaret Waldemar, the Semiramis of the North, Queen of Denmark and Norway, joining address to force, conquered Sweden, and formed these three great states into one kingdom. After her decease, the country was distracted by civil wars; throwing off and submitting again to the Danish yoke, under the alternate administration of kings and popular protectors. Two of these tyrants oppressed them terribly about the year 1520; the one, Christiern II. King of Denmark, a monster in vice, without one compensating virtue; the other an archbishop of Upsal, primate of the kingdom, equally barbarous with King Christiern. These two, in concert, caused the consuls and magistrates of Stockholm, together with ninety-four senators, to be seized in one day and massacred by the common executioners, under the pretext that they were excommunicated by the Pope, for having defended the rights of the State against the Archbishop. After this, they gave up Stockholm to be pillaged, and the whole town was put to the sword, without distinction of age or sex.

While these men, agreeing as to the means of oppression, and differing only in dividing the spoil, were committing acts of the greatest cruelty, and exercising a most tyrannical despotism, a singular and novel event gave a turn to the affairs of the North.

Gustavus Vasa, a youth descended from the ancient Kings of Sweden, issued forth from amidst the forests of Delecarlia, where he had lain concealed, in order to deliver his country from slavery. He had one of those great souls which nature so seldom forms, possessed of all the qualities neces-



sary to govern mankind. The advantages of a fine person, and a noble mien, prepossessed every one in his favour, so that he gained partisans wherever he appeared. His eloquence, to which his engaging deportment gave peculiar force, was the more persuasive, as it was artless and simple. His enterprising genius formed those projects which to the vulgar appear rash, but are imputed to a noble daring by great minds; and these his courage and perseverance enabled him to accomplish. Intrepid yet prudent, of a gentle disposition in a ferocious age, he was, in short, as virtuous as it is supposed the head of a party can possibly be.

Gustavus had been the hostage of Christiern, and had been detained a prisoner, contrary to the law of nations. Having escaped from prison, he had disguised himself in the habit of a peasant, and wandered about in the mountains and woods of Delecarlia; where he was reduced to the necessity of working in the copper-mines, for subsistence and concealment. Buried as he was in these subterraneous caverns, he had the courage to form the design of dethroning the tyrant. To this end, he discovered himself to the peasants, who looked upon him as one of that superior order of beings to which common men owe a natural submission. These servile savages he soon converted into soldiers. He attacked Christiern and the Archbishop, repeatedly defeated them, banished them from Sweden, and at last was deservedly chosen by the States, king of that country of which he had been a deliverer.

He was scarcely established on the throne, when he undertook an enterprise still more difficult than conquest. The real tyrants of the State were the Bishops, who, having engrossed almost all the wealth of the kingdom, made use of it to oppress the subjects, and make war upon the King. Their power was the more formidable, as popular ignorance held it to be sacred. On the Catholic religion, therefore, Gustavus revenged the criminality of its ministers; so that in less than two years, Lutheranism was introduced into Sweden; and that rather by the arts of policy, than by the influence

of authority. Having thus conquered the kingdom, as he used to express it, from the Danes and the clergy, he reigned a successful and absolute monarch to the age of seventy, when he died full of glory, leaving his family and religion in peaceable possession of the throne.

Gustavus Adolphus was one of his descendants, commonly called the Great Gustavus. This prince made a conquest of Ingria, Livonia, Bremen, Verdun, Wismar, and Pomerania, besides above a hundred places in Germany, which, after his death, were yielded up by the Swedes. He shook the throne of Ferdinand the Second, and protected the Lutherans in Germany, in which he was secretly assisted by the See of Rome, who dreaded the power of the emperor much more than that of heresy. It was this Gustavus who, by his victories, contributed in fact to humble the House of Austria; although the glory of that enterprise is usually ascribed entirely to Cardinal de Richelieu, who well knew how to procure himself the reputation of those great actions which Gustavus was content with performing. He was on the point of extending the war beyond the Danube, and perhaps of dethroning the Emperor, when he was killed, in the thirty-seventh year of his age, at the battle of Lutzen, which he gained over Walstein, carrying with him to his grave the name of Great, lamented by the people of the North, and respected even by his enemies.

His daughter Christini, a woman of uncommon genius, was much fonder of conversing with men of letters than of reigning over a people whose knowledge was confined to the art of war. She rendered herself as famous for resigning a throne, as her ancestors had been for obtaining or establishing it. The protestants have aspersed her character, as if it were impossible for a person to be possessed of great virtues without adhering to Luther; while the papists have triumphed too much on the pretended conversion of a woman who was no more than a philosopher. She retired to Rome, where she passed the remainder of her days in the midst of the arts she was fond of, and for which she had renounced a kingdom at twenty-seven years of age.

Before her abdication, she prevailed on the states of Sweden to elect her cousin, Charles Gustavus X. son to the Count Palatine, and duke of Deux-Points, to succeed to the crown. This prince added new conquests to those of Gustavus Adolphus; carrying immediately his arms into Poland, where he gained the famous battle of Warsaw, which lasted three days. He waged a long and successful war with the Danes; besieged their capital; re-united Schonen to Sweden; and confirmed, at least for a time, the Duke of Holstein in the possession of Sleswick. Experiencing afterwards a reverse of fortune, he concluded a peace with his enemies, and turned his ambition against his subjects. Thus he formed the design of establishing a despotic government in Sweden, but died, like Gustavus the Great, in the thirty-seventh year of his age, before he had been able to complete that system of despotism which was brought to perfection by his son, Charles XI.

Charles XI. a warrior like his ancestors, was more despotic than any of them. He abolished the authority of the senate, which was declared the senate of the king, and not of the kingdom. He was frugal, vigilant, indefatigable; which would have made him beloved by his subjects, had not his despotic spirit converted their love into fear.

In 1680 he married Ulrica Eleonora, daughter to Frederick III. King of Denmark, a princess of great virtues, and worthy of greater confidence than her husband reposed in her. Of this marriage, on the 27th of June, 1682, was born King Charles XII. the most extraordinary man, perhaps, that ever appeared in the world. In him were united all the great qualities of his ancestors; nor had he any other fault or misfortune but that he carried all these virtues to excess. It is this prince of whom we propose to write whatever we have learned with certainty relating either to his person or his actions.

The first book he was set to read, was the work of Samuel Puffendorff, in order to give him an early knowledge of his own and the neighbouring States. The first foreign lan-



guage taught him, was the German, which he continued ever after to speak with the same fluency as his mother tongue. At seven years of age, he was a proficient in horsemanship; when the violent exercises in which he delighted, and which discovered his martial turn, soon gave him a vigorous constitution, capable to support the fatigues to which his natural inclination prompted him.

Though gentle in his infancy, he betrayed an inflexible obstinacy. The only way to bend him, was to awaken his sense of honour; with the name of Glory, every thing could be obtained from him. He had an aversion to Latin; but as soon as he heard that the kings of Poland and Denmark understood it, he learned it presently, and retained so much of it as to be able to speak it all the rest of his life. The same means were employed to engage him to learn the French; but he persisted, as long as he lived, in the disuse of that tongue, which he would not speak, even to the French ambassadors themselves, though they understood no other.

As soon as he had acquired a little knowledge of the Latin, his teacher made him translate Quintus Curtius; a book to which he was attached still more on account of the subject than the style. The preceptor, who explained this author to him, asking him one day, what he thought of Alexander; "I think," said the prince, "I could wish to resemble him." "But," resumed the preceptor, "he lived only two and thirty years." "And is that not long enough (replied he) for one who has conquered kingdoms?" The courtiers did not fail to report these answers to the king his father, who exclaimed, "This boy will surpass his father, and even Gustavus the Great." Amusing himself one day in the royal apartments in viewing two plans, the one of a town in Hungary, which the Turks had taken from the emperor; the other of Riga, the capital of Livonia, a province conquered by the Swedes, about a century before; under the plan of the town in Hungary were written these words, taken from the book of Job: "The Lord hath given it me, and the Lord hath taken it from me; blessed be the name of the Lord."

The young prince having read this inscription, immediately took a pencil, and wrote under the plan of Riga, "The Lord hath given it to me, and the devil shall not take it from me." Thus, in the most indifferent actions of his childhood, his unconquerable spirit would frequently discover the characteristic traces of an uncommon genius, which plainly indicated what he would one day prove.

He was eleven years of age when he lost his mother; who died on the fifth of August, 1693, of a disease, as was supposed, owing to the bad usage she had received from her husband, and to her endeavours to conceal her chagrin. Charles XI. had, by means of a certain court of justice, called the Chamber of Liquidations, erected by his sole authority, deprived a great number of his subjects of their wealth. Crowds of citizens ruined by this chamber, nobility, merchants, farmers, widows, and orphans, filled the streets of Stockholm, and daily repaired to the gates of the palace, to vent their unavailing complaints. The queen relieved these unhappy people as much as lay in her power; she gave them her money, her jewels, her furniture, and even her clothes: and when she had no more to give them, she threw herself in tears at her husband's feet, beseeching him to have pity on his subjects. The king gravely answered her, "Madam, we took you to bring us children, not to give us advice;" and from that time he is said to have treated her with a severity which shortened her days.

He died four years after her, on the fifteenth of April, 1697, in the forty-second year of his age, and the thirty-seventh of his reign, at a time when the Empire, Spain, and Holland, on one side, and France on the other, had referred the decision of their quarrels to his arbitration, and when he had already begun the work of pacification between these powers.

He left his son, who was then fifteen years of age, a throne, well established at home, and respected abroad; subjects poor, indeed, but warlike and loyal; with finances in good order, and under the management of able ministers.

Charles XII. at his accession to the throne, found himself



not only the absolute and undisturbed master of Sweden and Finland, but also of Livonia, Carelia, Ingria, Wismar, Wi-bourg, the islands of Rugen and Oesel, and the finest part of Pomerania, together with the dutchy of Bremen and Ver-dun, all of them the conquests of his ancestors, secured to the crown by long possession, and by the solemn treaties of Munster and Olivia, and supported by the terror of the Swe-dish arms. The peace of Ryswick, begun under the auspi-ces of his father, being concluded under those of the son, he found himself the mediator of Europe at the commencement of his reign.

The laws of Sweden fix the majority of their kings at the age of fifteen; but Charles XI., who was entirely absolute, deferred by his last will the majority of his son to the age of eighteen. In this he favoured the ambitious views of his mother Edwiga-Eleonora, of Holstein, dowager of Charles X., who was appointed by the king, her son, tutoress to the young king, her grandson, and regent of the kingdom, in conjunction with a council of five persons.

The regent had a share in the management of public af-fairs during the reign of her son. She was now advanced in years; but her ambition, which was greater than her ge-nius, prompted her to entertain the hopes of possessing au-thority for a long time under the king, her grandson. She kept him at as great a distance as possible from affairs of state. The young prince passed his time either in hunting or in reviewing his troops, and would even sometimes exercise with them; which amusement seemed only to be the natural effect of his youthful vivacity. He never betrayed any dis-satisfaction sufficient to alarm the regent, who flattered her-self that the dissipation of mind occasioned by these diver-sions would render him incapable of application, and leave her the longer in possession of the regal power.

One day in the month of November, in the same year his father died, after having reviewed several regiments, as Piper, the counsellor of state, was standing by him, he seemed to be absorbed in a profound reverie. "May I take the liberty

(said Piper to him) of asking your majesty what you are thinking of so seriously?" "I am thinking, (replied the prince,) that I am worthy to command these brave fellows; and I don't like that either they or I should any longer receive orders from a woman." Piper immediately seized this opportunity of making his fortune; but conscious that his own interest was not sufficient for the execution of such a dangerous enterprise as the removal of the queen from the regency, and the hastening of the king's majority, he proposed the affair to Count Axel Sparre, a man of an ardent mind, and who sought to procure himself credit. On being flattered with the confidence of the king, Sparre entered into his measures, and undertook the management of the whole business, while he was working only to promote the interest of Piper. The counsellors of the regency were soon brought over to the scheme, and precipitated the execution of it, in order to recommend themselves the more effectually to the king.

They went in a body to propose it to the queen, who by no means expected such a declaration. The states-general were then assembled; the counsellors of the regency proposed the affair; there was not a dissenting voice; the point was carried with a rapidity that nothing could withstand; so that Charles XII. had only to signify his desire of reigning, and in three days the states bestowed the government upon him. The power and credit of the queen sunk in an instant; she led afterwards a life of retirement, more suitable to her age, though less agreeable to her temper. The king was crowned on the 24th of December following, on which day he made his entry into Stockholm, on a sorrel horse shod with silver, having a sceptre in his hand, and a crown upon his head, amidst the acclamations of a whole people, fond of novelty, and conceiving always great hopes from a young prince.

The ceremony of the consecration and coronation belongs to the archbishop of Upsal; almost the only privilege that remains to him of the great number that were enjoyed by

his predecessors. After having anointed the prince, according to custom, he held the crown in his hand, in order to put it upon his head; when Charles snatched it from him, and crowned himself, regarding the poor prelate all the while with a stern look. The multitude, who are always dazzled by every thing that has an air of grandeur, applauded this action of the king. Even those who had groaned most severely under the tyranny of the father, suffered themselves to applaud in the son this arrogance, which was a presage of their slavery.

Charles was no sooner master of the kingdom, than he made Piper his chief confidant, entrusting him at the same time with the management of public affairs, making him prime minister, though without the name. A few days after, he created him a count, which is a dignity of great eminence in Sweden, and not an empty title, that may be assumed without any importance, as in France.

The beginning of the king's reign gave no very favourable idea of his character; so that it was imagined he had been more impatient to reign than worthy of it. He cherished, indeed, no dangerous passion; but his conduct discovered nothing but the violences of youth and obstinacy. He seemed to be equally haughty and indolent. The \*ambassadors who resided at his court took him even for a person of mean capacity, and represented him as such to their respective masters. The Swedes entertained the same opinion of him: nobody knew his real character: he did not even know it himself, until the storm that suddenly arose in the North, gave him an opportunity of displaying his concealed talents.

Three powerful princes, taking the advantage of his youth, conspired, almost at the same time, to effect his ruin. The first was Frederick IV. king of Denmark, his cousin. The second was Augustus, elector of Saxony and king of Poland. Peter the Great, czar of Muscovy, was the third, and the most dangerous. It is necessary to unfold the

\* The original letters confirm this.



origin of these wars, which produced such great events. To begin with Denmark :

Of the two sisters of Charles XII., the eldest was married to the duke of Holstein, a young prince of an undaunted spirit, and of a gentle disposition. The duke, oppressed by the king of Denmark, repaired to Stockholm with his spouse, and throwing himself into the arms of the king, earnestly implored his assistance, not only on account of being his brother-in-law, but as he was likewise the king of a people who bore an irreconcilable hatred to the Danes.

The ancient house of Holstein, dissolved into that of Oldenburgh, had been advanced by election to the throne of Denmark in 1449. All the kingdoms of the North were at that time elective ; though the kingdom of Denmark soon after became hereditary. One of its kings, called Christiern III., had such an affection for his brother Adolphus, or at least such a regard for his interest, as is rarely met with among princes. He was unwilling to see him destitute of sovereign power, and yet he could not dismember his own dominions. He therefore divided with him the duchies of Holstein, Gottorp, and Sleswick, by a whimsical kind of agreement, which was, that the descendants of Adolphus should ever after govern Holstein in conjunction with the kings of Denmark ; that those two duchies should belong to both in common ; and that the king of Denmark should be able to do nothing in Holstein without the duke, nor the duke without the king. So strange a union, of which, however, there has been within these few years a similar instance in the same family, was for near the space of eighty years, the source of perpetual disputes between the crown of Denmark and the house of Holstein-Gottorp ; the king always endeavouring to oppress the dukes, and the dukes to render themselves independent of the kings. A struggle of this nature had cost the last duke his liberty and sovereignty ; both which, however, he recovered at the conferences of Altena, in 1689, by the interposition of Sweden, England and Holland, who became guarantees for the execution of the treaty. But as

a treaty between princes is frequently no more than a submission to necessity, till the stronger shall be able to crush the weaker, the contest was revived with the greater virulence than ever between the new king of Denmark and the young duke; during whose absence at Stockholm the Danes had committed some acts of hostility in the country of Holstein, and had entered into a secret agreement with the king of Poland to crush the king of Sweden himself.

Frederick Augustus, elector of Saxony, whom neither the eloquence nor negotiations of the Abbe de Polignac, nor the great qualities of the Prince of Conti, his competitor for the throne, had been able to prevent from being chosen king of Poland about two years before, was a prince no less remarkable for his incredible strength of body, than for his bravery and gallantry of mind. His court was, next to that of Lewis XIV., the most splendid of any in Europe. Never was a prince more generous or munificent, or bestowed his favours with a better grace. He had purchased the votes of one half of the Polish nobility, and overawed the other by the approach of a Saxon army. Thinking he should have occasion for his troops, in order to establish himself the more firmly on the throne, he wanted a pretext for retaining them in Poland; he therefore resolved to employ them in attacking the king of Sweden, which he did on the following occasion.

Livonia, the most beautiful and the most fertile province of the North, belonged formerly to the Knights of the Teutonic Order. The Russians, the Poles, and the Swedes, had disputed the possession of it. The Swedes had carried it about a hundred years ago; and it had been solemnly ceded to them by the peace of Oliva.

The late King Charles XI., amidst his severities to his subjects in general, had not spared the Livonians. He had stripped them of their privileges, and of part of their patrimonies. Patkul, unhappily so famous afterwards for his tragical death, was deputed by the nobility of Livonia, to carry to the throne the complaints of the province. He addressed his master in a speech, respectful, indeed, but bold, and full

of that manly eloquence which calamity, when joined to courage, inspires. But kings too frequently consider these public addresses as no more than vain ceremonies, which it is customary to suffer, without paying them any regard. Charles XI., however, who could play the hypocrite extremely well, when he was not transported by the violence of his passion, gently struck Patkul on the shoulder : " You have spoke for your country," said he, " like a brave man, and I esteem you for it ; go on." Notwithstanding, in a few days after, he caused him to be declared guilty of high treason, and, as such, to be condemned to death. Patkul, who had secreted himself, made his escape, and carried his resentment with him to Poland ; where he was afterwards admitted into the presence of King Augustus. Charles XI. was now dead ; but Patkul's sentence was still in force, and his indignation still unabated. He represented to the Polish monarch the facility of conquering Livonia, the people of which were provoked to despair, and ready to throw off the Swedish yoke, at the same time that their king was a child, and incapable of making any defence. These representations were well received by a prince already desirous of making so great a conquest. Augustus had engaged at his coronation, to exert his utmost efforts to recover the provinces which Poland had lost ; and he imagined that, by making an irruption into Livonia, he should at once please the people, and establish his own power ; in both which particulars, however plausible, he at last found himself disappointed. Every thing was soon got ready for a sudden invasion, without even condescending to have recourse to the vain formalities of declarations of war and manifestoes. The storm thickened at the same time on the side of Muscovy ; the monarch who governed that empire deserves the attention of posterity.

Peter Alexiowitz, czar of Russia, had already made himself formidable by the battle he had gained over the Turks in 1697, and by the reduction of Asoph, which opened to him the dominion of the Black Sea. But it was by actions still more glorious than his victories that he aspired to the



name of Great. Muscovy, or Russia, comprehends the northern parts of Asia, and of Europe, extending from the frontiers of China for the space of fifteen hundred leagues, to the borders of Poland and Sweden. This immense country, however, was hardly known to Europe before the time of Czar Peter. The Muscovites were less civilized than the Mexicans, when discovered by Cortes : born the slaves of masters as barbarous as themselves, they remained in a state of ignorance, in want of all the arts, and in such an insensibility of that want, as suppressed every motive to industry. An ancient law, which they held as sacred, forbade them, under pain of death, to leave their native country without permission of their patriarch. This law, enacted with a view to preclude them from all opportunities of becoming sensible of their slavery, was yet acceptable to a people who, in the depth of their ignorance and misery, disdained all commerce with foreign nations.

The æra of the Muscovites bears date from the creation of the world ; since which they conceive 7207 years were elapsed at the beginning of the last century, without being able to assign any reason for this computation. The first day of their year answered to the thirteenth of September, new style. The reason alleged for this regulation is, that it is most probable God created the world in autumn, the season when the fruits of the earth are in their full maturity. Thus, the only appearance of knowledge which they had, was founded in gross error : not one of them ever dreamed that the autumn of Muscovy might possibly be the spring of another country, situated in an opposite climate. It was not long since the people at Moscow were going to burn the secretary of a Persian ambassador, who had foretold an eclipse of the sun. They did not so much as know the use of figures ; but in all their computations made use of little beads strung upon brass wires. They had no other manner of reckoning in the offices of revenue, not even in the treasury of the czar.

Their religion was, and still is, that of the Greek Chris-

tians, but mixed with many superstitious rites, to which they were the more strongly attached, in proportion as they were the more extravagant, and their burthen the more intolerable. Few Muscovites would dare to eat a pigeon, because the Holy Ghost is painted in the form of a dove. They regularly observed four Lents in the year; during which time of abstinence they never presumed to eat either eggs or milk. God and St. Nicholas were the objects of their worship, and next to them the czar and the patriarch. The authority of the last was as unbounded as the ignorance of the people. He pronounced sentence of death, and inflicted the most cruel punishments, without any possibility of an appeal from his tribunal. He made a solemn procession twice a year on horseback, attended by all his clergy. The czar on foot held the bridle of his horse, and the people prostrated themselves before him in the streets, as the Tartars do before their Grand Lama. Confession was in use among them, but it was only in cases of the greatest crimes. In these, absolution was necessary, but not repentance. They thought themselves pure in the sight of God, as soon as they received the benediction of their papas. Thus they passed without remorse, from confession to theft and murder; and what among other Christians is a restraint from vice, with them was an encouragement to wickedness. They would not even venture to drink milk on a fast; although on a festival, masters of families, priests, married women, and maids, would make no scruple to intoxicate themselves with brandy. There were religious disputes, however, among them, as well as in other countries; but their greatest controversy was, whether lay-men should make the sign of the cross with two fingers or with three. One Jacob Nursoff, in the preceding reign, had raised a sedition in Astracan, on the subject of this dispute. There were even some fanatics among them, as there are in those civilized nations where every one is a theologian; and Peter, who always carried justice into cruelty, caused some of these unhappy wretches, called the Voskojesuits, to be committed to the flames.



The czar, in his extensive empire, had many other subjects who were not Christians. The Tartars inhabiting the western coasts of the Caspian Sea, and the Palus Mæotis, were Mahometans; the Siberians, the Ostiacks, and the Samoiedes, who lie towards the Frozen Sea, were savages, some of whom were idolaters, and others had not even the knowledge of a God; and yet the Swedes, who were sent prisoners among them, were better pleased with their manners than with those of the ancient Muscovites.

Peter Alexiowitz had received an education that tended still more to increase the barbarism of this part of the world. His natural disposition led him to caress strangers, before he knew what advantages he might derive from their acquaintance. A young Genevese, named Le Fort, of an ancient family in Geneva, the son of a druggist, was the first instrument he employed in the course of time, to change the face of affairs in Muscovy. This young man, sent by his father to be a merchant at Copenhagen, quitted his business, and followed an ambassador of Denmark to Muscovy, from that restlessness of mind which is always experienced by such as feel themselves superior to their situation. He took it into his head to learn the Russian language. The rapid progress which he made in it excited the curiosity of the czar, who was yet in his youth. Le Fort became acquainted with him; he insinuated himself into his familiarity; he often talked to him of the advantages of commerce and navigation; he told him how Holland, which had never possessed the hundredth part of the states of Muscovy, made as great a figure by means of her commerce alone, as the Spains, a small province of which she had formerly been, both useless and despised. He entertained him with the refined policy of the princes of Europe, with the discipline of their troops, the police of their cities, and the infinite number of manufactures, arts, and sciences, which render the Europeans powerful and happy. These discourses awakened the young emperor as from a profound lethargy; his mighty genius, which a barbarous education had repressed, but had not

been able to destroy, unfolded itself almost at once. He resolved to be a man, to rule over men, and to create a new nation. Many princes before him had renounced their crowns from disgust to the weight of business, but none like him had ceased to be a king, in order to learn how to govern better. This is what was done by Peter the Great.

He left Muscovy in 1698, having reigned but two years, and went to Holland, disguised under a common name, as if he had been a domestic servant of the same Mr. Le Fort, whom he sent in quality of ambassador extraordinary to the States General. As soon as he arrived at Amsterdam, he enrolled himself among the shipwrights of the India Company's wharf, under the name of Peter Michæloff, but he was commonly called Peter Bas, or Master Peter. He worked in the yard like the other mechanics. At his leisure hours he learned such parts of the mathematics as are useful to a prince, fortification, navigation, and the art of drawing plans. He went into the workmen's shops, and examined all their manufactures, in which nothing could escape his observation. From thence he went over to England, where, having perfected himself in the art of ship building, he returned to Holland, carefully observing every thing that might turn to the advantage of his own country. At length, after two years of travel and labour, to which no man but himself would have willingly submitted, he again made his appearance in Muscovy, with all the arts of Europe in his train. Artists of every kind followed him in crowds. Then were seen for the first time, large Russian ships in the Baltic, and on the Black Sea, and the ocean. Stately buildings, of a regular architecture, were raised among the Russian huts. He founded colleges, academies, printing-houses, and libraries. The cities were brought under a regular police. The clothes and customs of the people were gradually changed, though not without some difficulty; and the Muscovites learned by degrees the true nature of a social state. Even their superstitious rites were abolished; the dignity of the patriarch was suppressed; and the czar declared himself the

head of the church. This last enterprise, which would have cost a prince less absolute than Peter both his throne and his life, succeeded almost without opposition, and insured to him the success of his other innovations.

After having humbled an ignorant and a barbarous clergy, he ventured to make a trial of instructing them, though by that means he ran the risk of rendering them formidable; but he was too sensible of his own power to entertain any fear of it. He caused philosophy and theology to be taught in the few monasteries that still remained. True it is, this theology still savours of that barbarous period in which Peter civilized his people. A person of undoubted veracity assured me that he was present at a public disputation, where the point of controversy was, Whether the practice of smoking tobacco was a sin? The respondent maintained that it was lawful to get drunk with brandy, but not to smoke, because the Holy Scriptures saith, "that which proceedeth out of the mouth defileth the man, and that which entereth into it doth not defile him."

The monks were not pleased with this reformation. The czar had hardly erected printing-houses, when they made use of them to decry him. They declared in print that Peter was Anti-Christ, for that he deprived the living of their beards, and allowed the dead to be dissected in his Academy. But another monk, who aimed at promotion, refuted this book, and proved that Peter could not be Anti-Christ, because the number 666 was not to be found in his name. The libeller was accordingly broke upon the wheel, and the author of the refutation was made bishop of Rezan.

This reformer of Muscovy enacted, in particular, a very salutary law, the want of which reflects disgrace on many civilized nations. This enacted, that no man engaged in the service of the state, no citizen established in trade, and especially no minor, should retire into a convent.

Peter knew of what infinite consequence it was to prevent useful subjects from consecrating themselves to idleness, and to hinder young people from disposing of their



liberty at an age when they were incapable of disposing of the least part of their patrimony. But this law, though calculated for the general interest of mankind, is daily eluded by the industry of the monks; as if they were in fact gainers by peopling their convents at the expense of their country.

The czar not only subjected the church to the state, after the example of the Turkish emperors, but, by a more masterly stroke of policy, dissolved a militia similar to that of the Janizaries; and accomplished, in a short time, what the Sultans had long in vain attempted. He disbanded the Russian Janizaries, who were called Strelitz, and kept the czars in subjection. This body of soldiery, more formidable to their masters than to their neighbours, consisted of about thirty thousand foot, one half of which remained at Moscow, while the other was stationed upon the frontiers. The pay of a Strelitz was no more than four rubles a year; but this deficiency was amply compensated by privileges and extortions. Peter formed at first a company of foreigners, among whom he enrolled his own name, and did not think it beneath his dignity to begin the service in the capacity of a drummer, and to perform the duties of that mean office; so much did the nation stand in need of examples! By degrees he became an officer. He gradually raised new regiments; and at last, finding himself master of a well disciplined army, he broke the Strelitz, who durst not disobey him.

The cavalry were nearly the same with that of Poland, or what the French formerly was, when the kingdom of France was no more than an assemblage of fiefs. The gentlemen were mounted at their own expense, and fought without discipline, and sometimes with no other arms than a sabre or a bow, incapable of command, and consequently of conquest.

Peter the Great taught them to obey, both by the example he set, and the punishment he inflicted; for he served in the quality of a soldier and subaltern officer, and as czar he severely punished the boyards, that is, the gentlemen, who pretended that it was the privilege of their order not to serve



but by their own consent. He established a regular body to serve the artillery, and took five hundred bells from the churches to be converted into cannon. In the year 1614 he had thirteen thousand pieces of ordnance. He likewise formed companies of dragoons, troops very suitable to the genius of the Muscovites, and to the size of their horses, which are small. In 1738, the Russians had thirty regiments of these dragoons, consisting of a thousand men each, well disciplined and accoutred. He likewise established regiments of hussars in Russia, and had even a school of engineers, in a country where, before himself, no one understood the elements of geometry. He was also himself a good engineer; but his chief excellence lay in his knowledge of naval affairs; he was an able sea captain, a skilful pilot, a good sailor, and expert shipwright, and his knowledge of these arts was the more meritorious, as he was born with a great dread of the water.

In his youth, he could not pass over a bridge without trembling: on all these occasions, he caused the wooden windows of his coach to be shut; but of this constitutional weakness he soon got the better by his courage and resolution. He caused a beautiful harbour to be built at the mouth of the Tanais, near Asoph, in which he proposed to keep a number of gallies; and some time after, thinking that these vessels, so long, light, and flat, would probably succeed in the Baltick, he had upwards of three hundred of them built at his favourite city of Petersburg. He showed his subjects the method of building ships with deals only, and taught them the art of navigation. He had even learnt surgery, and, in a case of necessity, has been known to tap a person for the dropsy. He was well versed in mechanics, and instructed the workmen.

The revenue of the czar, when compared to the immense extent of his dominions, was indeed inconsiderable. It never amounted to four and twenty millions of livres, reckoning the mark at about fifty livres, as we do to-day, though we may not do so to-morrow. But he may always be accounted rich

who has it in his power to accomplish great undertakings. It is not the scarcity of money that debilitates a state; it is the want of men, and men of abilities.

Russia, notwithstanding the women are fruitful and the men robust, is not very populous. Peter himself, in civilizing his dominions, unhappily contributed to the decrease of his people. Frequent levies in his wars, which were long and unsuccessful; nations transplanted from the coasts of the Caspian Sea to those of the Baltick, destroyed by fatigue, or cut off by diseases; three-fourths of the Muscovite children dying of the small pox, which is more dangerous in those climates than in any other; in a word, the melancholy effects of a government, savage for a long time, and barbarous even in its police; these are the causes that in this country, comprehending so great a part of the continent, there are still vast deserts. Russia is, at present, supposed to contain five hundred thousand families of gentlemen; two hundred thousand lawyers; something more than five millions of citizens and peasants, who pay a sort of land-tax; six hundred thousand men in the provinces conquered from the Swedes. The Cossacks in the Ukraine, and the Tartars that are subject to Muscovy, do not exceed two millions. In fine, it appears that in this immense country there are not above fourteen millions of people, that is, a little more than two-thirds of the inhabitants of France.\*

While the czar was thus employed in changing the laws, the manners, the militia, and the very face of his country, he likewise resolved to increase his greatness by encouraging commerce, which at once constitutes the riches of a particular state, and contributes to the interest of the world in general. He undertook to make Russia the centre of trade between Asia and Europe. He determined to join the Duna, the Volga, and the Tanais, by canals, of which he drew the

\* This was written in the year 1727. The population of Russia hath greatly increased since that time, as well by military conquest, as by the arts of civil policy, and the care which has been taken to induce foreigners to come to and reside in the country.

plans ; and thus to open a new passage from the Baltick to the Euxine and Caspian Seas, and from those seas to the Northern Ocean. The port of Archangel, frozen up nine months in the year, and which could not be entered without making a long and dangerous circuit, did not appear to him sufficiently commodious. So long ago, therefore, as the year 1700, he had formed a design of opening a sea-port on the Baltick, that should become the magazine of the north, and of building a city that should prove the capital of his empire.

He had even then attempted the discovery of a north-east passage to China ; and the manufactures of Pekin and Paris were intended to embellish his new city.

A road by land, 754 versts\* long, running through marshes that were to be drained, was to lead from Moscow to his new city. Most of these projects have been executed by himself ; and the two empresses, his successors, have even improved upon those of his schemes that were practicable, and abandoned only such as it was impossible to accomplish.

He always travelled through his dominions as much as his wars would permit ; but he travelled like a legislator and a naturalist ; examining nature every where ; endeavouring to correct or perfect her ; taking himself the soundings of seas and rivers ; ordering sluices, visiting docks, causing mines to be worked, assaying metals, and in directing accurate charts to be drawn ; in the execution of which he himself assisted.

He built upon a desert spot the imperial city of Petersburg, containing at present sixty thousand houses, the residence of a splendid court, whose amusements are of the most refined taste. He built the harbour of Cronstadt, on the Neva, and St. Croix, on the frontiers of Persia ; he erected forts in the Ukraine, and in Siberia ; established offices of admiralty at Archangel, Petersburg, Astracan, and Asoph ; founded arsenals, and built and endowed hospitals. All his own houses were mean, and executed in a bad taste ; but he spared no expense in rendering the public buildings grand and magnificent.

\* A verst consists of 754 paces.



The sciences, which in other countries have been the slow product of so many ages, were, by his care and industry, imported into Russia in full perfection. He established an academy on the plan of the famous societies of Paris and London. The Delisles, the Bulfingers, the Hermannus's, the Bernouilles, and the celebrated Wolf, a man who excelled in every branch of philosophy, were all invited and brought to Petersburg at a great expense. This academy still subsists; and the Muscovites, at length, have philosophers of their own nation.

He obliged the young nobility to travel for improvement, and to bring back into Russia the politeness of foreign countries. I have myself seen young Russians, who were men of genius and science. It was thus that a single man hath reformed the greatest empire in the world. It is, however, shocking to reflect, that this reformer of mankind should have been deficient in that first of all virtues, the virtue of humanity. Brutality in his pleasures, ferocity in his manners, and barbarity in his revenges, sullied the lustre of his many virtues. He civilized his subjects, and yet remained a barbarian. He was conscious of this, and once said to a magistrate of Amsterdam, "I reform my country, but am not able to reform myself." He has executed his sentence upon criminals with his own hands, and at a debauch at table has shown his address at cutting off heads.

In Africa, there are princes who thus with their own hands shed the blood of their subjects; but these pass for barbarians. The death of a son, whom he ought to have corrected, or disinherited, would render the memory of Peter the object of universal hatred, were it not that the great and many blessings he bestowed upon his subjects, were almost sufficient to excuse his cruelty to his own offspring.

Such was Czar Peter; and his great projects were little more than in embryo, when he joined the kings of Poland and Denmark against a child whom they all despised. The founder of the Russian empire was ambitious of being a conqueror; and such he thought he might easily become by the

prosecution of a war, which being so well projected, could not fail, he imagined, of proving useful to all his designs; the art of war was a new art, which it was necessary to teach his people.

He wanted, besides, a port on the east side of the Baltick, to facilitate the execution of his schemes. He wanted the province of Ingria, which lies to the north-east of Livonia. The Swedes were in possession of it, and from them he resolved to take it by force. His predecessors had claims upon Ingria, Esthonia, and Livonia; and the present seemed a favourable opportunity of reviving those claims, which had been buried for a hundred years, and had been extinguished by treaties. He entered, therefore, into a league with the king of Poland, to wrest from the young Charles the Twelfth all the territories that lie between the Gulph of Finland, the Baltick Sea, Poland, and Muscovy.

## BOOK II.

ARGUMENT.—A remarkable and unexpected change in the character of Charles.—At the age of eighteen he engages in a war against Denmark, Poland, and Muscovy.—Finishes that with Denmark in six weeks.—Defeats eighty thousand Russians with only eight thousand Swedes.—Marches into Poland.—A description of Poland and its government.—Charles gains many battles, and becomes master of Poland, where he prepares to appoint a king.

THUS did three powerful sovereigns threaten the infancy of Charles the Twelfth. The news of these preparations dismayed the Swedes, and alarmed the council. All their distinguished generals were dead; and they had every reason to tremble under the reign of a young king, who had, as yet, given them but a bad opinion of his abilities. He hardly ever came to a council for any other purpose than to lay his legs across on the table; absent and indifferent, he never appeared to interest himself in any thing.

As the council were one day deliberating, in his presence, on the dangerous predicament in which they stood, some of them proposed to avoid the impending tempest by negotiations; when the young prince immediately rose with the grave and assured air of a man of superior abilities, who had fixed his resolution.

“Gentlemen,” said he, “I am resolved never to begin an unjust war, but never to finish a just one but with the destruction of my enemies. My resolution is fixed; I will march and attack the first who shall declare war; and when I shall have conquered him, I hope to strike terror into the rest.” All the old councillors, astonished at this declaration, looked at each other without daring to answer. In short, surprised at having such a king, and ashamed to appear less confident than him, they received his orders for the war with admiration.

They were still more agreeably surprised when they beheld him renounce at once the most innocent amusements of



his youth. From the first moment of his preparing himself for the war, he began an entire new course of life, from which he never after departed a single moment. Full of the idea of Alexander and Cæsar, he determined to imitate those two heroes in every thing but their vices. He no longer indulged himself in magnificence, sports, and recreations; and reduced his table to the most rigid frugality. He had before loved pomp in his dress; but he now dressed himself as a common soldier. It was generally supposed that he had formed a strong attachment to a lady of his court; but whether this supposition was true or not, it is certain that he from that time renounced all fondness for the sex, not only from the fear of being governed by them, but to set an example to his soldiers, whom he was desirous of bringing back to the most rigid discipline; and perhaps, also, from the vanity of being deemed the only king who could subdue a passion so difficult to surmount. He likewise resolved to abstain from wine during the rest of his life. Many people have told me that he made this resolution merely to get the better of his inclinations in every thing, and to give an additional lustre to his self-denial; but by far the greater part assured me, that he was determined by those means to punish himself for an excess which he had been guilty of, and for an affront he had offered to a lady at table, even in the presence of the queen, his mother. Even if that be true, this self-condemnation of his behaviour, and the abstinence which he imposed on himself throughout his life, is a species of heroism not less to be admired.

His first step was to grant assistance to his brother-in-law, the duke of Holstein. Eight thousand men were immediately sent into Pomerania, a province bordering upon Holstein, to fortify the duke against the attacks of the Danes. And indeed the duke had need of them. His dominions were laid waste, his castle of Gottorp taken, and the city of Tonningen pressed by an obstinate siege, to which the king of Denmark had come in person in order to enjoy a conquest which he imagined certain. This spark began to throw the

empire into a flame. On the one side the Saxon troops of the king of Poland, those of Brandenburg, Wolfenbüttele, and Hesse Cassel, advanced to join the Danes. On the other, the eight thousand men sent by the king of Sweden, the troops of Hanover and Zell, and three regiments of Dutch, came to assist the duke. At the time the little country of Holstein became thus the theatre of war, two squadrons, the one from England, and the other from Holland, appeared in the Baltick. These two states were guarantees of the treaty of peace of Altena, which treaty the Danes had broken through; the English and Dutch therefore were in earnest, at this time, to support the oppressed duke of Holstein, because it was for the interest of their commerce to check the growing power of the king of Denmark. They knew that the Danish king, being once master of the passage of the Sound, would impose the most oppressive laws on the mercantile nations, as soon as ever he was in a situation to do it with impunity. This mutual interest has long engaged the Dutch and English to maintain, as much as possible, the balance of power between the northern princes: they, therefore, joined the young king of Sweden, who appeared in danger of being crushed by the combination of so many enemies, and supported him for the same reason that the others attacked him—because they looked upon him as incapable of defending himself.

Charles was amusing himself with hunting the bear, when he received the news of the Saxons having made an irruption into Livonia: the manner in which he practised this amusement was as novel as dangerous; he used no other arms than forked sticks, and a small net fixed to some trees; a bear of an inconceivable size ran directly at the king, who brought it down to the ground, after a long struggle, by the aid only of the net and his stick. It must be confessed, that, in reflecting on such adventures, on the personal strength of King Augustus, and the travels of Czar Peter, one would be apt to think we lived in the days of Hercules and Theseus.

Charles set out on his first campaign the eighth of May,

new style, in the year 1700; when he quitted Stockholm, to which he never after returned. An innumerable crowd of people accompanied him as far as the port of Carlscoon, offering up prayers for his success, and with tears expressing their admiration. Before he left Sweden, he established at Stockholm a Council of Defence, composed of several senators, whose duty it was to take care of every thing that regarded the navy, the army, and the fortifications of the country. The body of the senate was to regulate, provisionally, every thing in the interior part of the kingdom. Having thus established a regular mode of administration in his dominion, his mind, divested of every other care, was entirely taken up with the war. His fleet consisted of three and forty ships; that in which he himself sailed, was called "The King Charles," and was the largest that had ever been seen, carrying an hundred and twenty guns. In this ship Count Piper, his first minister of state, General Renschild, and the Count de Guiscard, ambassador from France to Sweden, embarked along with him. He joined the squadrons of the allies, when the Danish fleet declining the combat, gave the three combined fleets an opportunity of approaching Copenhagen nigh enough to throw into it several shells.

Certain it is, that it was the king himself who then proposed to General Renschild to make a descent, and to besiege Copenhagen by land, while it was thus blocked up by sea. Renschild was astonished at a proposal which showed equal marks of skill and courage in a prince so young and so unexperienced. Every thing was immediately prepared for the descent, and orders given for the embarkation of five thousand men, who lay upon the coasts of Sweden, and joined the troops they had on board. The king quitted his large ship, and went into a frigate of less weight: they then began by sending off three hundred grenadiers, in small shallops; and among these were some small flat bottomed boats, which carried the fascines, chevaux-de-frise, and the implements of the pioneers; then followed five hundred men in other shallops; and lastly came the king's chosen ships of



war, together with two English and two Dutch frigates, who were to favour the debarkation under cover of their cannon.

Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, is situated in the Isle of Zealand, in the midst of a beautiful plain, having the Sound on the north west, and the Baltick Sea on the east, where the king of Sweden then lay. At this unexpected movement of the vessels, which threatened a descent, the inhabitants, confounded by the inactivity of their own fleet, and by the movements of the Swedish vessels, waited with terror to see on what part the storm would fall. The Swedish fleet stopped over against Humblebeck, about seven miles from Copenhagen, at which place the Danes instantly assembled their cavalry. Their foot were posted behind entrenchments, and all the artillery they could bring up was turned against the Swedes.

The king then quitted his frigate, and got into the first barge, at the head of his guards; when the French ambassador standing next to him, he said to him in Latin, (for he would never speak French,) "You have nothing, Mr. Ambassador, to do with the Danes: you need go no farther, if you please." "Sire," answered the Count de Guiscard, in French, "the king my master ordered me to reside with your majesty; I flatter myself you will not banish me your court, which was never more brilliant than it is to-day." In saying this, he gave his hand to the king, who leaped into the barge, into which Count Piper and the ambassador immediately followed. They advanced under shelter of the cannon of the ships which favoured their landing. The long boats were as yet but three hundred paces from the shore, when Charles, impatient at their slow motion, threw himself from his barge into the sea, sword in hand, having the water above his waist: his ministers, the French ambassador, the officers and soldiers, immediately followed his example, and marched to the shore, in spite of a shower of the enemy's musketry. The king, who had never in his life heard a volley of muskets loaded with ball, demanded of Major General Stuart, whom he perceived near him, what

it was that occasioned the whizzing in his ears? "It is the noise of the musket-balls that they fire upon you," said the major to him. "Good!" replied the king; "then from henceforward that shall be my music." At this instant the major, who had explained the noise made by the musket-shot, received one in his shoulder; and a lieutenant dropped down dead on the other side of the king.

It generally happens that the troops who are attacked in their trenches are beaten, because those who make the attack always possess an impetuosity, which those who merely defend themselves can never arrive at; besides, the waiting the enemy's approach is often an acknowledgment of their own weakness, and of their adversary's superiority. The Danish cavalry and militia, after a feeble resistance, took to flight. The king, thus become master of their intrenchments, fell upon his knees to return thanks to God for this first success of his arms. He immediately caused redoubts to be raised towards the town, and marked himself a place for the encampment. In the mean time, he sent back his transports to Schonen, a part of Sweden bordering upon Copenhagen, for a reinforcement of nine thousand men. Every thing conspired to favour the vivacity of Charles: these troops were already assembled on the shore, and ready to embark; accordingly the next day a favourable wind brought them to him.

This transportation was effected in the sight of the Danish fleet, which did not dare to advance. Copenhagen being intimidated, immediately despatched deputies to the king, to beseech him not to bombard the town. He received them on horseback, at the head of his regiment of guards, and the deputies threw themselves on their knees before him. He made the town pay him four hundred thousand rix-dollars, and ordered them to bring in all sorts of provisions to the camp, for which he promised faithfully to pay. They carried him the provisions, because it was necessary to obey, although they did not much expect that the conquerors would have so much condescension: the carriers, however, were greatly astonished at being paid generously, and without de-

lay, by the lowest soldiers in the army. There had long prevailed among the Swedish troops a strict discipline, which had not a little contributed to this victory; and the young king increased its severity. There was not a soldier that dared to refuse payment for what he bought, still less to go a plundering, nor even to go out of the camp. He did still more; for in a victory his troops did not strip the dead till they had received his permission; and he easily brought them to observe this law. Prayers were regularly said in his camp twice a day, at seven o'clock in the morning, and at four in the afternoon; at which he never failed to assist in person, and to set the soldiers an example of piety as well as of valour. His camp, much better regulated than even the city of Copenhagen, had every thing in abundance; the peasants preferred selling their commodities to the Swedes, their enemies, rather than to the Danes, who did not pay them so well. Even the citizens were obliged to come, more than once, to seek in the camp of the king of Sweden those provisions which their own markets failed to furnish.

The king of Denmark was at this time in Holstein, whither he seemed to have gone for no other purpose than to raise the siege of Tonningen. He saw the Baltick Sea covered with the enemy's ships, a young conqueror already master of Zealand, and ready to seize on his capital. He therefore caused it to be published throughout his dominions, that those who took up arms against the Swedes should have their liberty. This declaration was of great weight in a country formerly free, but in which, at that time, all the peasants, and even many of the citizens, were slaves. Charles sent word to the king of Denmark, that he made war only to oblige him to make peace, and that he must either resolve to do justice to the duke of Holstein, or see Copenhagen destroyed, and his kingdom put to the fire and sword. The Dane was too happy in having to do with a conqueror who piqued himself on his justice. A congress was assembled in the town of Travendal, on the frontiers of Holstein. The king of Sweden would not suffer the negotiations to be de-



laid by the arts of ministers, but was determined that the treaty should be finished with the same rapidity with which he had descended into Zealand. It was, in effect, concluded on the fifth of August, to the advantage of the duke of Holstein, who was indemnified for all the expenses of the war, and delivered from oppression. The king of Sweden, satisfied with having succoured his ally, and humbled his enemy, would accept of nothing for himself. Thus Charles XII., at eighteen years of age, began and finished this war in less than six weeks.

It was precisely at this time that the king of Poland invested the town of Riga, the capital of Livonia, and the czar also advanced, on the side of the east, at the head of near a hundred thousand men. Riga was defended by the old Count d'Alberg, a Swedish general, who, at the age of eighty, joined the fire of a young man to the experience of sixty campaigns. Count Fleming, afterwards minister of Poland, a great man in the field, as well as in the cabinet, and Patkul the Livonian, pressed the siege, under the inspection of the king; but in spite of several advantages that the besiegers had gained, the experience of the old Count d'Alberg rendered their efforts useless, and the king of Poland despaired of taking the town. He at last laid hold of an honourable pretence for raising the siege. Riga was full of merchandise belonging to the Dutch. The States General ordered their ambassador at the court of Augustus to make representations to him on that head. The king of Poland needed not much intreaty. He consented to raise the siege rather than occasion the least damage to his allies; who were not astonished at this excess of complaisance, of which they knew the true cause.

There remained, then, nothing more for Charles to do, to finish his first campaign, than to march against his rival in glory, Peter Alexiowitz. He was the more exasperated against him, as there were at that time at Stockholm, three Muscovite ambassadors, who had just sworn to the renewal of an inviolable peace. He could not comprehend, as lie

piqued himself on a most rigid integrity, that a legislator, like the czar, could make a jest of what ought to be sacred. The young prince, full of honour himself, did not imagine that there could be a system of morality for kings different from that for individuals. The emperor of Muscovy had just published a manifesto, which he had much better have suppressed. He there alleged, that the reason of his making war was, that he had not sufficient honour paid him when he passed *incognito* through Riga; and likewise, that they sold their provisions to his ambassadors at too dear a rate. It was for these injuries that he ravaged Ingria with eighty thousand men.

He appeared before Narva, at the head of this great army, on the first of October, at a season of the year more severe in this climate, than it is in the month of January at Paris. The czar, who in this inclement season, would sometimes ride post four hundred leagues to see a mine or a canal, was not more careful of his troops than of himself. Besides, he knew that the Swedes, since the time of Gustavus Adolphus, could make war in the midst of winter as well as in summer; he, therefore, wished to accustom the Russians likewise to know no distinction of seasons, and to render them, one day, not in the least inferior to the Swedes. In this manner, at a time when the ice and snow obliged other nations, even in temperate climates, to suspend the war, did the Czar Peter besiege Narva, within thirty degrees of the pole, while Charles XII. advanced to relieve it. The czar no sooner arrived before the place, than he hastened to put in practice what he had just learned in his travels. He marked out his camp, fortified it on every side, raised redoubts at due distances, and opened the trenches himself. He had given the command of his army to the Duke de Croi, a German, and a skilful general, but who at that time was little assisted by the Russian officers. As for himself, he held no other rank in his own troops than that of a lieutenant. He thus set the example of military obedience to the nobility, who were till then undisciplined, and who were only used

to govern ill-armed slaves without experience or order. It was not to be wondered at, that he who turned carpenter at Amsterdam to procure himself fleets, should serve as lieutenant at Narva to teach his country the art of war.

The Russians are robust, indefatigable, and perhaps as brave as the Swedes; but time and discipline alone can render troops warlike and invincible. The only regiments from which any thing was expected were commanded by German officers, but they were few in number. The rest were barbarians, forced from the forests, and covered with the skins of wild beasts; some were armed with arrows, and some with clubs; few of them had fuses; none had seen a regular siege; nor was there a good gunner in the whole army. A hundred and fifty cannon, which ought to have reduced the little town of Narva to ashes, were scarcely able to make a breach; while, on the other hand, the artillery of the city destroyed, at every discharge, whole ranks of the enemy in their trenches. Narva was almost without fortifications; and the Baron de Hoorn, who commanded it, had not a thousand regulars; and yet this innumerable army could not reduce it in ten weeks.

It was the fifteenth of November when the czar was apprized that the king of Sweden, having crossed the sea with two hundred transports, was upon the march to the relief of Narva. The Swedes were but twenty thousand strong; yet the czar had no superiority but in number. Far, then, from despising his enemy, he employed every art he was master of to overpower him. Not content with eighty thousand men, he prepared another army to oppose him, and to cross him at every turn. He had already ordered near thirty thousand men, who advanced by long marches from Pleskow. He then took a step which would have rendered him contemptible, if a legislator who had performed so many great exploits could be made so. He quitted his camp, where his presence was necessary, in quest of this fresh body of men, which might have arrived very well without him, and appeared by this behaviour to be afraid of engaging in an in-



trenched camp, a young and inexperienced prince who might come to attack him.

But be this as it may, he wanted to inclose Charles between two armies. This was not all; thirty thousand men, detached from the camp which lay before Narva, were posted a league from the city, on the road along which the King of Sweden was to pass; twenty thousand Strelitz were placed at a greater distance on the same road, and five thousand others formed an advanced guard. All these troops Charles was obliged to march over before he could arrive at the camp, which was fortified with a rampart and a double ditch. The king of Sweden had landed at Pernaw, in the Gulph of Riga, with about sixteen thousand of his infantry, and a little more than four thousand horse. From Pernaw he hastened his march to Revel, followed by all his cavalry, and only four thousand foot. As he always marched on first, without waiting for the rest of his troops, he soon found himself, with his eight thousand men only, near the advanced posts of the enemy. He did not hesitate a moment about attacking them; which he did, one after the other, without giving them time to be acquainted with what a small number they had to engage. The Muscovites, seeing the Swedes thus rush upon them, thought they had the whole army to encounter, and the advanced guard of five thousand men, who were posted among the rocks, a station in which one hundred resolute men might have repulsed a whole army, betook themselves to flight on the first approach of the Swedes. The twenty thousand men who were behind, seeing their companions fly, took the alarm, and carried disorder with them into the camp. All the posts were carried in two days; and what upon other occasions would have been counted for three victories, did not retard the march of the king a single hour. At last he appeared, with his eight thousand men, fatigued with so long a march, before a camp of eighty thousand Muscovites, defended by one hundred and fifty pieces of cannon; and scarcely had the troops taken a short repose, when, without deliberating, he gave orders for the attack.

The signal was two fusees, and the word in German, "With the aid of God." A general officer having represented to him the greatness of the danger, "Why! do you imagine," said he, to him, "that with my eight thousand brave Swedes, I shall not be able to march over the bodies of eighty thousand Muscovites?" A moment after, fearing that there appeared a little gasconade in these words, he run after the officer himself: "Are you not, then, of my opinion?" said he to him: "Have I not a double advantage over my enemies? The one, that their cavalry can do them no service; and the other, that the place being narrow, their great number will but incommode them; and therefore I shall in reality be stronger than they." The officer did not dare to be of a different opinion; and they marched against the Muscovites about mid-day, on the 10th of November, 1700.

As soon as the cannon of the Swedes had made a breach in their intrenchments, they advanced with their bayonets fixed on their fusees, having at their backs a furious shower of snow, which came in the face of the enemy. The Russians stood their ground for half an hour, without quitting their side of the trenches. The king made his attack upon the right of the camp, where the quarters of the czar were, hoping to encounter him, not knowing that the emperor himself was gone to seek the forty thousand men who were expected every moment to arrive. At the first discharge of the enemy's muskets, the king received a shot in his neck; but it being a spent ball, it lodged in the plaits of his black cravat, and did him no harm. His horse was killed under him. M. de Spart told me, that the king sprung nimbly upon another horse, saying, "These gentry here make me do my exercise;" and continued fighting and giving orders with the same presence of mind. After three hours engagement, the intrenchments were forced on every side. The king followed the right of the enemy as far as the river Narva with his left wing, if about four thousand men who were pursuing near forty thousand can be so called. The bridge

breaking under the fugitives, the river was in a moment filled with the dead. The others, desperate, returned to their camp, without knowing where they went; they there found some barracks, behind which they posted themselves. There they defended themselves for some time, not being able to make their escape; but at last their generals, Dolgorouky, Gollofkin, and Federowits, came and surrendered themselves to the king, and laid their arms at his feet. At the same time arrived the Duke de Croi, general of the army, who likewise surrendered himself, with thirty officers.

Charles received all these prisoners of distinction with as much politeness, and in as friendly a manner, as if he had been paying them the honours of an entertainment in his own court. He detained none but the generals. All the subaltern officers and soldiers were conducted, unarmed, as far as the river Narva; and were there furnished with boats, that they might pass over to their own country. In the mean time, night approached, and the Muscovites on the right still continued fighting. The Swedes had not lost fifteen hundred men; while eighteen thousand Muscovites had been killed in their intrenchments, a great number drowned, and many had passed the river; yet there still remained a sufficient number in the camp to have entirely destroyed the Swedes. But it is not the number of the dead, it is the terror of the survivors that occasions the loss of battles. The king took the advantage of the small part of the day that remained, to seize the enemy's artillery. He posted himself advantageously between their camp and the town, where he slept some hours on the ground, wrapped up in his cloak, waiting for day-break, that he might fall on the enemy's left wing, which was not yet entirely routed. But at two o'clock in the morning, General Wade, who commanded that wing, having heard of the gracious reception the king had given to the other generals, and in what manner he had dismissed all the subaltern officers and soldiers, sent to beseech the same favour. The conqueror told him, that he had nothing to do but to approach at the head of his army, and lay down his arms and colours



at his feet. Accordingly, this general soon after appeared with his Muscovites, who were about thirty thousand in number. They marched uncovered, soldiers and officers, through less than seven thousand Swedes. The soldiers, in passing before the king, threw their guns and swords upon the ground, and the officers laid their ensigns and colours at his feet. He caused the whole of this multitude to be conducted over the river, without detaining a single soldier prisoner. If he had kept them, the number of the prisoners would have been at least five times greater than that of the conquerors.

He then entered victorious into Narva, accompanied by the Duke de Croi, and other general officers of the Muscovites. He caused their swords to be returned them; and knowing that they wanted money, and that the merchants of Narva would not lend them any, he sent a thousand ducats to the Duke de Croi, and five hundred to each of the Muscovite officers, who could not cease admiring this treatment, of which they had not even an idea. A relation of the victory was immediately drawn up to send to Stockholm, and to the allies of Sweden; but the king struck out with his own hand every thing which appeared too much in praise of himself, and to reflect on the czar. His modesty could not, however, prevent them from striking at Stockholm several medals, to perpetuate the memory of those events. Among others, they struck one which represented the king on one side, standing on a pedestal, to which were chained a Muscovite, a Dane, and a Pole; on the other side was a Hercules, armed with his club, having under his feet a Cerberus, with this inscription: *Tres uno contrudit ictu.*

Among the prisoners taken at the battle of Narva, there was one who exhibited a striking instance of the revolutions of fortune: he was the eldest son and heir of the king of Georgia; he was called the Czarasis Artschilou. This title of czarasis signifies a prince, or son of the czar, among the Tartars, as well as in Muscovy; for the word czar, or tsar, meant a king among the ancient Scythians, from whom all

these people are descended, and is not derived from the Cæsars of Rome, so long unknown to these barbarians. His father Mitelleski, czar and master of the most beautiful part of the country which lies between the mountains of Ararat and the eastern coasts of the Black Sea, had been driven from his throne by his own subjects in 1688, and had chosen rather to throw himself into the arms of the emperor of Muscovy, than have recourse to the Turks. The son of this king, at the age of nineteen, desired to follow Peter the Great in his expedition against the Swedes, and was taken fighting by some Finland soldiers, who had already stripped him, and were going to kill him, when Count Renschild rescued him from their hands, clothed him, and presented him to his master. Charles sent him to Stockholm, where this unhappy prince died in a few years after. The king, on seeing him depart, could not help making, in the hearing of his officers, a natural reflection on the strange destiny of an Asiatic prince, born at the foot of Mount Caucasus, going to live a captive among the snows of Sweden. "It is," says he, "as if I were one day to be a prisoner among the Tartars of the Crimea." These words made no impression at the time; but in the sequel, they were remembered too well, when an event turned them into a prediction.

The czar was advancing by long marches with the army of forty thousand Russians, thinking to surround his enemy on all sides; when he heard, before he had proceeded half way, of the battle of Narva, and the dispersion of his whole camp. He was not so obstinate as to think of attacking with his forty thousand men, without experience or discipline, a conqueror who had just destroyed eighty thousand men in their intrenchments. He returned upon his footsteps, and pursued, without ceasing, the design of disciplining his troops, at the same time that he civilized his subjects. "I know very well," said he, "the Swedes will beat us for a long time, but in the end, they themselves will teach us to beat them." Moscow, his capital, was in terror and confusion at this defeat. Nay, such was the pride and ignorance of

the people, that they imagined they had been conquered by a power more than human, and that the Swedes were real magicians. This opinion was so general, that public prayers were ordered to be put up on this occasion to St. Nicholas, patron of Muscovy. This prayer is too singular not be repeated. It is as follows :

“O thou, who art our perpetual consoler in all our adversities, great St. Nicholas, infinitely powerful, by what sin have we offended thee in our sacrifices, kneelings, bowings, and thanksgivings, that thou hast thus abandoned us? We have implored thy assistance against these terrible, insolent, enraged, dreadful, and unconquerable destroyers, when like lions and bears who have lost their young, they have attacked us, terrified, wounded, and killed by thousands, us thy people. As it is impossible that this can be without sorcery and enchantment, we beseech thee, O great St. Nicholas, to be our champion and our standard-bearer, to deliver us from this tribe of sorcerers, and to drive them far from our frontiers, with the recompense that is their due.”

In the mean time that the Muscovites were complaining to St. Nicholas of their defeat, Charles XII. returned thanks to God, and prepared himself for new victories.

The king of Poland had reason to expect that his enemy, being conqueror over the Danes and Muscovites, would presently fall upon him; he therefore united himself firmer than ever with the czar. These two princes agreed upon an interview, that they might take their measures in concert. They met at Birzen, a small town in Lithuania, without any of those formalities, which only serve to retard business, and which were not suited either to their situation or their humour. The princes of the north see each other with a familiarity which is not yet established in the southern parts of Europe. Peter and Augustus passed five days together in pleasures which bordered upon excess; for the czar, though he wanted to reform his nation, could never correct in himself his dangerous propensity to debauchery.

The king of Poland engaged himself to furnish the czar



with fifty thousand German troops, which were to be hired of different princes, and for which the czar was to pay. The czar, on his side, was to send fifty thousand Russians into Poland, to learn the art of war, and promised to pay to Augustus three millions of rix dollars in two years. This treaty, if it had been executed, might have been fatal to the King of Sweden: it was a ready and sure method of rendering the Muscovites good soldiers; it was, perhaps, forging chains for a part of Europe.

Charles prepared himself to prevent the king of Poland from reaping the fruit of this league. After having passed the winter at Narva, he appeared in Livonia, in the neighbourhood of Riga, the very town which Augustus had in vain besieged. The Saxon troops were posted along the river Duna, which is very broad in that place: Charles, who was on the other side of the river, was obliged to dispute their passage. The Saxons were not commanded by their prince, he being sick; but were headed by the Marshal de Stenau, who took the office of general; under whom Prince Ferdinand, duke of Courland, commanded; and that very Patkul now defended his country against Charles XII., sword in hand, who formerly vindicated its rights with his pen, at the hazard of his life, against Charles XI. The King of Sweden had caused some large boats to be built on a new plan, the sides of which were much higher than ordinary, and could be raised or let down like a draw-bridge. When raised, they covered the troops on board; and when let down they served as bridges to land them. He made use also of another artifice. Having remarked that the wind blew from the north, where he lay, to the south, where the enemy's camps were, he ordered that they should set fire to a quantity of wet straw; from which a thick smoke arising, it spread itself over the river, preventing the Saxons from seeing his troops, or observing what he was about. Under the cover of this cloud, he ordered several barks to put off, full of wet fuel; so that the cloud always increasing, and driven by the wind into the eyes of the enemy, made it im-

possible for them to know whether the king was passing the river or not. Meanwhile he alone conducted the execution of his stratagem. Having got over the greater part of the river, "Well," says he to General Renschild, "the Duna will be as favourable to us as the sea of Copenhagen; believe me, general, we shall beat them." He arrived in a quarter of an hour at the other side; and was mortified that he was the fourth person that leaped on shore. He immediately landed his cannon, and formed a line of battle, while the enemy, blinded with smoke, could not oppose him, except by a few random shot. The wind having dispersed the smoke, the Saxons saw the king of Sweden already advancing towards them.

Mareschal Stenau lost not a moment: scarce had he perceived the Swedes, when he fell on them with the best part of his cavalry. The violent shock of this body falling upon the Swedes at the instant they were forming their battalions, threw them into disorder. They gave way, were broken, and pursued even into the river. The king of Sweden rallied them in a moment, in the middle of the water, as easily as if he had been exercising at a review; after which his soldiers marched more compact than before, repulsed Mareschal Stenau, and advanced into the plain. Stenau finding that his troops were astonished, like an able general, made them retire into a dry place, flanked with a morass and a wood, where his artillery lay. The advantage of the ground, and the time thus given to the Saxons to recover their first surprize, restored to them their former courage. Charles did not hesitate to attack them; he had fifteen thousand men with him; Stenau and the duke of Courland about twelve thousand, with no other artillery than one dismounted iron cannon. The battle was obstinate and bloody; the duke had two horses killed under him; he penetrated three times into the centre of the king's guard: but at last, having been knocked off his horse by a blow with the butt-end of a musket, disorder prevailed throughout his army, which no longer disputed the victory. His cuirassiers carried him off

with great difficulty, bruised and half dead, from the thickest of the fight, and from under the horses heels, which trampled on him.

The king of Sweden, after his victory, flew to Mittau, the capital of Courland. All the towns of this duchy surrendered to him at discretion, so that it was a journey rather than a conquest. He passed without delay into Lithuania, conquering as he went along. He felt a flattering satisfaction, and he confessed it, when he entered as conqueror the town of Birzen, where the king of Poland and the czar had conspired against him some months before.

It was in this place that he first conceived the design of dethroning the king of Poland, by the hands of the Poles themselves. Being one day at table, his mind entirely taken up with this enterprise, and observing his usual temperance of diet, he was wrapped in profound silence, and seemed absorbed in the greatness of his conceptions, when a German colonel, who was present at dinner, observed, loud enough to be heard, that the repast which the czar and the king of Poland had made in the same place, was somewhat different from that of his majesty. "Yes," said the king, rising, "and I shall the more easily spoil their digestion." In short, intermixing a little policy with the force of his arms, he did not delay to prepare the event which he had meditated.

Poland, a part of the ancient Sarmatia, is a little larger than France, but less populous, though it is more so than Sweden. Its inhabitants were converted to christianity only about seven hundred and fifty years ago. It is very singular that the language of the Romans, who never penetrated into this country, is at this time spoken no where in common but in Poland; there every body speaks Latin, even among the very servants. This extensive country is very fertile; and the people are consequently less industrious. The artists and traders you meet with in Poland are Scots, French, and Jews, who buy, at a low price, corn, cattle, and the different commodities of the country; these they dispose of at Dantzic and in Germany, and sell to the nobles at a high price, to



gratify the only species of luxury which they know and love. Thus this country, watered with the most beautiful rivers, rich in pastures, in salt mines, and covered with luxuriant crops, remains poor in spite of its plenty, because the people are slaves, and the nobility are proud and indolent.

Its government is the most perfect model of the ancient government of the Goths and Celtæ, which has been corrected or altered every where else. It is the only state that has preserved the name of a republic with the royal dignity.

Every gentleman has a right to give his vote in the election of a king; and may even be elected himself. This most estimable right is attended with the greatest abuses; the throne is almost always put up to auction; and as a Pole is seldom rich enough to buy it, it has been often sold to strangers. The nobility and clergy defend their rights against the king, and deprive the rest of the nation of theirs. All the people are slaves; such is the destiny of men, that the greater number are every where, by some means or other, subjected to the less. There the peasant sows not for himself, but for his lord; to whom himself, his lands, and the labour of his hands, belong, and who can sell him, or cut his throat, as he would the beast in his field. All who are gentlemen are independent. There must be an assembly of the whole nation to try him in a criminal cause; and as he cannot be seized till he is condemned, he is hardly ever punished. There is a great number of poor; these engage in the services of the most powerful, receive a salary, and do the meanest offices for it. They like better to serve even their equals than to enrich themselves by commerce, and as they dress their master's horses, give themselves the title of electors of kings, and destroyers of tyrants.

Whoever sees the king of Poland in the pomp of royal majesty, would believe him the most absolute prince in Europe; he is, however, the least so. The Poles really make that contract with him, which in other nations is mere supposition between the king and his subject. The king of Poland even at his consecration, and in swearing to the *pacta*

*conventa*, absolves his subjects from the oath of obedience, in case he violates the laws of the republic.

He fills up all offices, and confers all honours. Nothing is hereditary in Poland but the land, and the rank of the nobility. The son of a palatine, or of the king, has no right to the dignities of his father; but there is this great difference between the king and the republic, that the former can take away no office after he has given it; while the republic may take away the crown from him, if he transgresses the laws of the state.

The nobility, jealous of their liberty, often sell their votes, but seldom their affections. Scarcely have they elected a king, but, fearing his ambition, they oppose him by their cabals. The grandees whom he has made, and whom he cannot unmake, often become his enemies, instead of remaining his creatures. Those who are attached to the court, are objects of hatred to the rest of the nobility; this always forms two parties; an unavoidable division, and even necessary in those countries where they will choose, at the same time, to have kings, and to preserve their liberties.

Whatever concerns the nation, is regulated in the states general, which they call diets. These states are composed of the body of the senate, and of several gentlemen. The senators are the palatines and the bishops; the second order is composed of the deputies of the particular diets of each palatinate. At these great assemblies, the archbishop of Gnesna, primate of Poland, and viceroy of the kingdom during the interregnum, presides, and is the first man of the state, next to the king. There is seldom any other cardinal in Poland but him; because the Roman purple giving no precedence in the senate, a bishop who shall be a cardinal will be obliged either to take his rank as senator, or renounce the solid rights of the dignity of his own country, to support the pretensions of a foreign honour.

These diets, by the laws of the kingdom, ought to be held alternately in Poland and Livonia. The deputies often decide their business sword in hand, in the same manner as the

ancient Sarmatians, from whom they are descended, and sometimes even in liquor, a vice of which the Sarmatians were ignorant. Every gentleman deputed to the states general enjoys the same right which the tribune of the people at Rome had, of opposing the laws of the senate. Any one gentleman who says, "I protest," stops by that single word the unanimous resolutions of all the rest; and if he leaves the place where the diet is held, the assembly is dissolved.

They apply to the disorders which arise from this law, a remedy more dangerous than the disease. Poland is seldom without two factions; unanimity in their diets, therefore, being impossible, each party forms confederacies, in which they decide by the plurality of voices, without paying any regard to the protests of the minority. These assemblies, not warranted by law, but authorized by custom, are held in the name of the king, though often without his consent, and against his interest; something in the manner in which the league in France made use of the name of Henry III. to ruin him; and as the parliament of England, which brought Charles I. to the block, began by placing that prince's name to all the resolutions which they took to destroy him. When the commotions are finished, it is the part of the general diets to confirm or quash the acts of these confederacies. A diet can alter every thing that has been done at preceding ones; for the same reason that in monarchical countries a king can abolish the laws of his predecessor, and even his own.

The nobility, who make the laws of the republic, constitute its strength also. They appear on horseback upon any great occasion, and are able to form a body of above a hundred thousand men. This great army, called *the pospolite*, moves with difficulty, and is ill-governed: the difficulty of obtaining provision and forage, makes it impossible for it to continue long assembled: it has neither discipline, subordination, nor experience; but the love of liberty which animates it renders it always formidable.

These nobles may be conquered, or dispersed, or even



held in slavery for a time, but they ~~xxx~~ shake off the yoke ; indeed they compare themselves to the reed, which the wind bends to the ground, but which rises again as soon as the wind ceases to blow. It is for this reason that they have no places of strength : they will have themselves to be the only bulwark of the republic ; nor will they suffer their king to build any forts, for fear he should make use of them more to oppress than to defend them. Their country is of course entirely open, except two or three frontier towns. If in a war either civil or foreign, they resolve to sustain a siege, they are obliged to raise fortifications of earth, repair the old walls that are half ruined, and enlarge their ditches that are almost filled up, so that the town is generally taken before the intrenchments are completed.

The *pospolite* are not always on horseback to defend the country ; they never mount but by the order of the diets, though sometimes, in extreme dangers, by the simple order of the king.

The ordinary guard of Poland, is an army which ought always to be maintained at the expense of the republic. It is composed of two corps, under the command of two different commanders in chief. The first corps is that of Poland, and ought to consist of thirty-six thousand men : the second, to the number of twelve thousand, is that of Lithuania. The two generals are independent the one of the other ; and though they are nominated by the king, they are accountable to nobody for their actions but the republic, and have an unlimited authority over their troops. The colonels are absolute masters of their regiments ; and it belongs to them to maintain and pay the soldiers as they are able ; but being seldom paid themselves, they ravage the country, and ruin the peasants, to satisfy their own avidity, and that of their soldiers. The Polish lords appear in these armies with more magnificence than they do in the towns ; and their tents are more ornamented than their houses. The cavalry, which makes up two thirds of the army, is composed of gentlemen, and is remarkable for the beauty of their horses, and the richness of their harness and accoutrements.

The gendarmes in particular, whom they distinguish into hussars and pancernes, never march without being accompanied by several valets, who hold their horses, which are adorned with plates and nails of silver, embroidered saddles, saddle-bows, and gilt stirrups, and sometimes of massy silver, together with large housings, trailing after the manner of the Turks, the magnificence of whom the Poles imitate as much as possible.

In the same degree that the cavalry is fine and superb, the infantry was then proportionably wretched, ill clothed, unarmed, without regimentals, or any thing uniform. It was so, at least, till about the year 1710. These infantry, who resemble wandering Tartars, supported with an astonishing fortitude, hunger, cold, fatigue, and all the hardships of war.

One may see in the Polish soldiers the character of the ancient Sarmatians, their ancestors, the same want of discipline; the same fury to attack, the same readiness to fly from and to return to the attack, and likewise the same disposition to slaughter when they are conquerors.

The king of Poland flattered himself at first, that in case of necessity, these two armies would fight in his favour; that the Polish *pospolite* would arm themselves at his orders; and that all these forces, joined to the Saxons, his subjects, and to the Muscovites, his allies, would form a multitude before which the small number of the Swedes would not dare to appear. But he saw himself almost at once deprived of these succours, by means of that very eagerness which he had shown to have them all at once.

Accustomed in his hereditary dominions to absolute power, he imagined, too fondly, that he might govern in Poland as he did in Saxony. The beginning of his reign made malcontents; and his first proceedings irritated the party who had opposed his election, and alienated almost all the rest. The Poles murmured to see their towns filled with Saxon garrisons, and their frontiers lined with troops. This nation, much more jealous of maintaining its liberty than anxious to attack its neighbours, did not regard the war of King Augus-

tus against the Swedes, and the irruption into Livonia, as an enterprise advantageous to the republic. It is difficult to deceive a free people respecting its true interest. The Poles knew, that if this war, undertaken without their consent, should prove unsuccessful, their country, open on every side, would become a prey to the king of Sweden; and that, if it was successful, they would be enslaved by their own king, who, being then master of Livonia and Saxony, would shut up Poland between these two states. In this alternative, either to be slaves of the king whom they had elected, or to be ravaged by Charles XII., who was justly incensed, they raised but one cry against the war, which they believed to have been declared more against themselves than Sweden. They regarded the Saxons and the Muscovites as the forgers of their chains; and seeing, soon after, that the king of Sweden had overcome every thing which opposed his passage, and was advancing with a victorious army into the very heart of Lithuania, they exclaimed against their sovereign with so much the more freedom, as he was unfortunate.

Two parties at this time divided Lithuania; that of the princess Sapielha, and that of Oginsky. These two factions began from private quarrels, and, at last, terminated in a civil war. The king of Sweden attached himself to the princess Sapielha; and Oginsky, ill supported by the Saxons, found his party almost annihilated. The Lithuanian army, whom these troubles, and the want of money, had reduced to a small number, was partly dispersed by the conquerors. The few who held out for the king of Poland, were separated into small bodies of fugitive troops, who wandered about the country, and subsisted by rapine. Augustus saw nothing in Lithuania but the weakness of his own party, the hatred of his subjects, and an hostile army conducted by a young king, enraged, victorious, and implacable.

There was, indeed, an army in Poland, but instead of its being composed of thirty-six thousand men, the number prescribed by law, there were not even eighteen thousand, not only ill-paid, and ill-armed, but their generals knew not as yet which side they should take.



The only resource of the king was, to order his nobility to follow him : but he was afraid of exposing himself to a refusal, which would have discovered his weakness, and consequently have augmented it.

It was in this state of trouble and uncertainty that all the palatinates demanded a diet of the king, in the same manner as in England, when all the bodies of the state, in difficult times, present addresses to the king, beseeching him to convoke a parliament. Augustus had more need of an army than a diet, in which the actions of the king, are strictly scrutinized. However, it was necessary that he should assemble one, lest he should incense the nation beyond a reconciliation ; it was accordingly appointed to be held at Warsaw, the second of December, in the year 1701. He soon perceived, however, that Charles had at least as much power as himself in this assembly. Those who favoured the Sapiehas, the Lubomirsky, and their friends, the Palatine Leczinsky, treasurer of the crown, (who owed his fortune to King Augustus,) and especially the partizans of the prince Sobiesky, were all secretly attached to the king of Sweden.

The most considerable of these partizans, and the most dangerous enemy that the king of Poland had, was the Cardinal Radziejousky, archbishop of Gnesna, primate of the kingdom, and president of the diet.

He was a man full of artifice and mystery in his conduct, entirely governed by an ambitious woman, whom the Swedes called *Madame Cardinal*, and who never ceased engaging him in intrigue and faction. The talent of the primate consisted, as we are told, in making use of circumstances without seeking to give birth to them. He appeared often to be irresolute, for who is not so in a civil war ? King John Sobiesky, the predecessor of Augustus, had first made him bishop of Warmia, and vice-chancellor of the kingdom. Radziejousky, being yet but a bishop, had obtained the cardinalship by the favour of the same king. This dignity soon opened his way to that of primate : thus uniting in his

own person every thing to impose upon mankind, he was in a state to undertake any thing with impunity.

He tried his credit, after the death of John, to place the Prince James Sobiesky on the throne; but the torrent of hatred which the father had incurred, though a truly great man, overwhelmed his son. After this, the cardinal primate joined to the Abbe de Polignac, ambassador of France, to give the crown to the prince of Conti, who was in effect elected. But money and Saxon troops triumphed over his negotiations. He suffered himself, at last, to be drawn over to the party that crowned the elector of Saxony, and waited with patience for an opportunity of making a division between the nation and this new king.

The victories of Charles XII., protector of Prince James Sobiesky, the civil war in Lithuania, and the general alienation of men's minds from King Augustus, made the cardinal primate believe that the time was arrived when he might send Augustus into Saxony, and open King John's son the way to the throne. This prince, formerly the innocent object of the hatred of the Poles, had begun to engage their affections from the time of their hatred to King Augustus; but he durst not as yet conceive an idea of so great a revolution, of which the cardinal was insensibly laying the foundation.

At first he seemed to wish to reconcile the king and the republic; he sent circular letters, dictated, in appearance, by the spirit of concord and charity; common and well known snares, but with which men are always caught. He wrote an affecting letter to the king of Sweden, conjuring him, in the name of Him whom all Christians equally adored, to give peace to Poland and her king. Charles XII. answered the intentions of the cardinal rather than his words. In the meantime, he remained in the great duchy of Lithuania with his victorious army, declaring that he would not disturb the diet; that he made war against Augustus and the Saxons, and not against the Poles; and that so far from attacking the republic, he came to relieve it from oppression. Those let-

ters and these answers were intended for the public. The emissaries that were continually going and coming between the cardinal and Count Piper, and the secret assemblies at the prelate's house, were the springs that regulated the motions of the diet; they proposed to send an ambassador to Charles XII., and unanimously demanded of the king, that he would call no more Muscovites to his frontiers, and that he should also send back his Saxon troops.

The bad fortune of Augustus had already done what the diet required of him. The league secretly concluded at Birzen with the Muscovites, was now become as useless, as it had at first appeared formidable. He was far from being able to send to the czar the fifty thousand Germans he had promised to raise in the empire. Even the czar, a dangerous neighbour of Poland, was in no haste to assist, with all his force, a divided kingdom, from whose misfortunes he hoped to reap some advantage. He contented himself with sending twenty thousand Muscovites into Lithuania, who did more mischief than the Swedes, flying every where before the conqueror, and ravaging the lands of the Poles, till at last, being pursued by the Swedish generals, and finding nothing more to pillage, they returned in bodies to their own country. With regard to the shattered remains of the Saxon armies beaten at Riga, Augustus sent them to winter and recruit in Saxony, to the end that this sacrifice, involuntary as it was, might regain him the affections of the irritated Poles.

The war was now turning into intrigues. The diet was divided into almost as many factions as there were palatines. One day the interests of King Augustus prevailed, the next they were proscribed. Every one cried out for liberty and justice; but no one knew what it was either to be free or just. The time was lost by caballing in private and haranguing in public. The diet knew neither what they wanted, nor what they ought to do. Great assemblies have hardly ever taken right counsel in civil broils; because the most courageous amongst them are engaged in the sedition, and the



well disposed are generally a prey to their fears. The diet dissolved in tumult the 17th of February, in the year 1702, after three months of cabals and irresolution. The senators, who are the palatines and bishops, remained at Warsaw. The senate of Poland has a right to make laws provisionally, which the diets seldom disannul. This body being less numerous, and accustomed to business, was far less tumultuous, and decided with greater despatch.

They decreed, that they should send to the king of Sweden the embassy proposed in the diet: that the prospolite should mount their horses, and hold themselves in readiness at all events; they made several regulations to appease the troubles in Lithuania, and still more to lessen the authority of the king, which was more to be feared than that of Charles.

Augustus chose rather at that time to receive hard laws from his conqueror than from his subjects. He determined to sue for a peace to the king of Sweden, and wanted to make a secret treaty with him. It was necessary to conceal this step from the senate, whom he regarded as an enemy still more untractable than Charles. This was a delicate affair; he entrusted it to the countess of Konigsmark, a Swedish lady of high birth, and to whom he was at that time attached. This lady, celebrated in the world for her wit and beauty, was more capable than any minister to bring a negotiation to a happy conclusion. Moreover, as she had an estate in the dominions of Charles XII., and had lived a long time in his court, she had a plausible pretext to seek this prince. She therefore went to the Swedish camp in Lithuania, and addressed herself directly to Count Piper, who, too hastily, promised her an audience with his master. The countess, among those perfections which rendered her one of the most amiable persons in Europe, had the singular talent of speaking the languages of several countries which she had never seen, with as much elegance as if she had been born there; she even amused herself, sometimes, in writing French verses, which might have been mistaken for the production of a person born at Versailles. Those she composed for Charles

XII., history ought not to omit. She introduced the heathen gods praising the different virtues of Charles. The piece concluded thus :

Enfin ehacun des Dieux discourant à sa gloire,  
Le plaçoit par avance au Temple de Memoire ;  
Mais Venus ni Bacchus n'en dirent pas un mot.  
Nay, all the gods to sound his fame combine,  
Except the deities of love and wine.

All her wit and beauty were, however, thrown away upon a man like the king of Sweden, who constantly refused to see her. She therefore resolved to throw herself in his way as he rode out to take the air, which he frequently did. She one day met him in a narrow path : she descended from her carriage as soon as she perceived him ; the king made her a low bow, turned his horse about, and rode back in an instant ; so that the only advantage which the countess of Konigsmark gained from her journey, was the satisfaction of believing that the king of Sweden feared nobody but her.

The king of Poland was now obliged to throw himself into the arms of the senate. He therefore made them two proposals, by the palatine of Marienburgh ; the one, that they should leave to him the disposition of the army of the republic, to whom he would pay, out of his own revenue, two quarters advance ; the other, that they should permit him to bring back twelve thousand Saxons into Poland. The cardinal primate returned him an answer, as severe as the refusal of the king of Sweden. He told the palatine of Marienburgh, in the name of the assembly, "that they had resolved to send an embassy to Charles XII., and that he would not advise him to bring back any Saxons."

The king, in this extremity, wished to preserve the appearance, at least, of royal authority. He sent one of his chamberlains, on his own part, to wait upon Charles, to know from him where and how his Swedish majesty would be pleased to receive the embassy of his master and the republic. Unluckily they had forgot to ask a passport from the Swedes for this chamberlain ; the king of Sweden, therefore, instead of giving him audience, caused him to be thrown

into prison, saying, "that he expected an embassy from the republic, and not from Augustus." This violation of the right of nations no law but that of a superior force could excuse.

Afterwards Charles, having left behind him garrisons in several towns in Lithuania, advanced beyond Grodno, a town well known in Europe for the diets that are held there, but ill built, and badly fortified.

A few miles on the other side Grodno, he encountered the embassy of the republic : it was composed of five senators. They desired, in the first place, to regulate the ceremony of their introduction, a thing that the king was unacquainted with : they then demanded that the republic should be styled "most serene," and that the coaches of the king and the senators should be sent to meet them. They were answered, that the republic should be styled "illustrious," and not "most serene," and that the king never made use of carriages ; that he had many officers about him, but no senators ; that a lieutenant-general should be sent to meet them, and that they should come on their own horses.

Charles XII. received them in his tent, with some appearance of military pomp ; their discourse was full of caution and reserve. It was remarked, that they were afraid of Charles, that they did not love Augustus, but that they were ashamed to take, by command of a stranger, the crown from a king whom they had elected. Nothing was concluded, and Charles gave them to understand, that he would settle all disputes at Warsaw.

His march was preceded by a manifesto, which the cardinal and his party spread over Poland in eight days. Charles, by this writing, invited the Poles to join their vengeance to his, and pretended to show them that his interest and theirs were the same. They were, however, very different : but the manifesto, supported by a great party, by the confusion of the senate, and the approach of the conqueror, made a very strong impression. They were obliged to own Charles for protector, because he would be so, and because it was happy for them that he contented himself with this title.



The senators who opposed Augustus, published this manifesto aloud, even in his presence ; the few who were attached to him observed a profound silence. At last, when they were apprised that Charles was advancing by long marches, they all prepared in the greatest confusion to depart. The cardinal quitted Warsaw among the first; the greatest part fled with precipitation ; some retired to their estates to wait the end of this affair, while others went to arm their friends. Nobody returned with the king, except the ambassadors of the emperor and of the czar, the pope's nuncio, together with a few bishops and palatines attached to his fortunes. He was obliged to fly, as there was nothing as yet decided in his favour. He hastened before his departure, to hold a council with the small number of senators who still represented the senate. But however zealous they were to serve him, they were nevertheless Poles, and had all conceived so great an aversion to Saxon troops, that they did not dare to grant him the liberty of recalling more than six thousand men for his defence, and even voted that those should be commanded by the grand general of Poland, and sent back as soon as they had made peace. The armies of the republic, indeed, they committed to his care.

After this resolution, the king quitted Warsaw, too weak to resist his enemies, and little satisfied even with his own party. He immediately published orders for assembling the *pospolite* and the armies, which were little more than empty names. He had nothing to hope for in Lithuania, where the Swedes then were. The army of Poland, reduced to a few troops, wanted arms, provisions, and inclination to fight. The greatest part of the nobility, intimidated, irresolute, and disaffected, remained at their different estates. In vain did the king, authorized by the laws of the land, order, on pain of death, that every gentleman should mount his horse and follow him ; it was become a problematical point whether they ought to obey him or not. His great resource was in the troops of the electorate, where the form of government being entirely absolute, did not leave him a doubt of their

obedience. He had already secretly commanded twelve thousand Saxons to advance with precipitation. He likewise recalled the eight thousand men he had promised the emperor in his war against France, and whom the necessity into which he was reduced obliged him to withdraw. To introduce so many Saxons into Poland, was to exasperate all minds, and violate the law made by his own party, who allowed him only six thousand; but he knew very well, that if he was conqueror they would not dare to complain, and if he was conquered they would not forgive his having introduced even the six thousand. At the time these soldiers were arriving in troops, and he was going from one palatinate to another, to assemble the nobility who were attached to him, the king of Sweden appeared before Warsaw on the fifth of May, 1702. At the first summons, the gates were opened to him. He dismissed the Polish garrison, disbanded the city guard, established posts in every part of the town, and ordered the inhabitants to come and deliver to him their arms; but, content with disarming them, and being unwilling to irritate them, he demanded a contribution of no more than one hundred thousand livres.

Augustus was at this time assembling his forces at Cracow, and was very much surprised to see the cardinal arrive there. This man pretended to keep up the decency of his character to the very last, and endeavoured to dethrone the king with the exterior behaviour of a good subject; he gave him to understand that the king of Sweden appeared disposed to listen to a reasonable accommodation, and humbly asked permission to seek him. The king granted him what he was not able to refuse, that is to say, the liberty of doing him mischief.

The cardinal primate hastened immediately to find the king of Sweden, before whom he had not as yet dared present himself. He saw this prince at Pragg, near Warsaw, but without the ceremonies with which he had received the ambassadors of the republic. He found this conqueror dressed in a coat of coarse blue cloth with gilt brass buttons,

large boots, and buff skin gloves which came up to his elbows, in a chamber without tapestry, in which were his brother-in-law the duke of Holstein, Count Piper, his first minister, and several general officers. The king advanced several paces to meet the cardinal; and they had a conference together, standing, of a quarter of an hour, which Charles finished by saying aloud, "I will not give peace to the Poles till they have elected another king." The cardinal, who expected such a declaration, caused it to be immediately known to all the palatinates, assuring them of the extreme sorrow he felt at it, and representing, at the same time, the necessity there was to obey the conqueror.

At this news, the king of Poland plainly perceived that he must either lose the throne, or preserve it by a battle. He exhausted all his resources for this great decision. All his Saxon troops were arrived from the Saxon frontiers, and the nobility of the palatinate of Cracow, where he still was, came in crowds to offer him their services. He exhorted each of these gentlemen to remember their oaths, and they promised to shed the last drop of their blood to support him. Encouraged by their support, and by the troops who bore the name of the army of the crown, he went for the first time to seek, in person, the king of Sweden, whom he presently found advancing towards Cracow.

The two kings met on the 13th of July, in the year 1702, in a vast plain near Clissau, between Warsaw and Cracow. Augustus had near twenty-four thousand men, while Charles had no more than twelve thousand.

The battle began by discharges of artillery. At the first volley from the Saxons, the duke of Holstein, who commanded the Swedish cavalry, a young prince of courage and virtue, received a cannon-ball in his reins. The king asked if he was killed, and was told yes: he made no answer: some tears fell from his eyes; and he held his hand up to his face for a moment; when all of a sudden, he spurred his horse with all his might, and rushed into the midst of the enemy at the head of his guards.



The king of Poland did every thing that could be expected from a prince who fought for his crown. He led his troops himself three times to the charge; but he had only the Saxons to fight with him; for the Poles, who formed his right wing, all fled at the commencement of the battle, some through fear, and others through disaffection. The good fortune of Charles carried all before it; and gained him a complete victory. He took possession of the enemy's camp, their colours and artillery, and of Augustus's military chest. He did not stop in the field of battle, but marched directly to Cracow, pursuing the king of Poland, who fled before him.

The citizens of Cracow were hardy enough to shut their gates against the conqueror. He caused them to be broken open, and the garrison did not dare to fire a single gun, but were driven with whips and canes into the castle, where the king entered with them. One officer of artillery only having courage to prepare himself to put the match to a cannon, Charles threw himself upon him, and tore it out of his hand. The commander threw himself on his knees before the king. Three Swedish regiments were quartered at discretion among the citizens, and the town taxed with a contribution of a hundred thousand rix dollars. The Count de Steinbock, who was made governor of the town, having been told that there were some treasures hid in the tombs of the kings of Poland, which are in the church of St. Nicholas at Cracow, had them opened, but found nothing, except some ornaments of gold and silver, which belonged to the church, of which, however, he took a part; and Charles even sent a gold cup to one of the Swedish churches, which would have raised the Polish catholics against him, could any thing have prevailed against the terror of his arms.

He departed from Cracow with a fixed resolution to pursue the king of Poland without ceasing: but a few miles from the town his horse fell, and he broke his thigh bone. He was obliged to be carried back to Cracow, where he was confined to his bed for six weeks, in the hands of his surgeons. This accident gave Augustus a little respite. He

immediately caused it to be reported throughout Poland and Germany, that Charles XII. was killed by this fall. This false report, believed for some time, threw every mind into astonishment and apprehension. In this short interval, he assembled at Marienburgh, and then at Lublin, all the orders of the kingdom, before convoked at Sendomir. This assembly was very numerous, few of the palatinates refusing to send their deputies thither. He regained almost every heart by presents and promises, and that affability so necessary to absolute kings to make themselves beloved, and to elected kings to enable them to maintain their thrones. The diet was soon undeceived with regard to the false report of the death of the king of Sweden; but motion having been given to this great body, it suffered itself to be carried along by the impulse it had received, all the members swearing to continue faithful to their sovereign; so much are great assemblies given to change. The cardinal primate himself, affecting still to be attached to Augustus, came to the diet of Lublin, where he kissed the king's hand, and did not refuse to take the oath with the rest. The oath was, that they had never attempted, nor ever would attempt, any thing against Augustus. The king excused the cardinal from the first part of the oath, and the prelate blushed when he swore to the last. The result of this diet was, that the republic of Poland should maintain an army of fifty thousand men, at their own expense, for the use of their sovereign; that they should give six weeks to the Swedes to declare either for peace or war; and the same time to the princess Sapieha, the first author of the troubles in Lithuania, to come and ask pardon of the king of Poland.

But, during these deliberations, Charles recovered of his wound, and overturned every thing before him. Always firm in the design of forcing the Poles to dethrone their king with their own hands, he caused a new assembly to be convoked at Warsaw, through the intrigues of the cardinal primate, to oppose that of Lublin. His generals represented to him, that this affair might be attended with endless delays,

and prove ineffectual at last; that, in the mean time, the Muscovites were improving in military science every day, in presence of the troops he had left in Livonia and Ingria; that the skirmishes which often happened in those provinces between the Swedes and the Russians, were not always attended with advantages to the former; and lastly, that his presence there might very soon be necessary. Charles, as unshaken in his projects, as impatient in his actions, replied, "Should I be obliged to stay here fifty years, I will not depart till I have dethroned the king of Poland."

He left the assembly of Warsaw to combat by their orations and writings that of Lublin, and to seek to justify their proceedings by the laws of the kingdom; laws always equivocal, which each party interprets to his own interest, and which success alone renders incontestable. As for himself, having increased his victorious troops with six thousand horse and eight thousand foot, which he had received from Sweden, he marched against the remainder of the Saxon army which he had beat at Clissau, and which had time to rally and recruit, while his fall from his horse had confined him to his bed. This army shunned his approach, and retired towards Prussia, to the north west of Warsaw. The river Bug was between him and his enemies. Charles swam across it at the head of his cavalry, whilst the infantry sought a ford somewhat higher. They came up with the Saxons the first of May, 1703, at a place called Pultesk. General Stenau commanded them, to the number of about ten thousand. The king of Sweden, in his precipitate march, had no more than the same number, certain that a less number would suffice. The terror of his arms was so great, that one half of the Saxon troops fled at his approach, without giving him battle. General Stenau stood, indeed, for a moment, with two regiments; but presently after was obliged to join in the general flight of his army, which was dispersed before it was conquered. The Swedes did not take more than a thousand prisoners, nor kill more than six hundred; having more difficulty to pursue than to defeat them.



Augustus having nothing but the remains of his Saxons, who were beaten on every side, retired in haste to Thorn, an ancient town of royal Prussia, situated on the Vistula, and under the protection of the Poles. Charles immediately prepared to besiege it; and the king of Poland, who did not think himself secure, retired, and flew into every corner of Poland where he could possibly assemble any soldiers, and into which the Swedes had not penetrated. In the meantime, Charles, amidst so many rapid marches, swimming across rivers, and hurried along with his infantry mounted behind his cavalry, had not been able to bring up his cannon before Thorn, and was obliged to wait till it came from Sweden by sea.

While he was posted here, a few miles from the town, he would often advance too nigh the ramparts, for the purpose of reconnoitering the enemy. The plain dress which he always wore was, in these dangerous excursions, of more utility than he was aware of; as it prevented his being remarked and singled out by his enemies, who would have fired upon his person. One day, having advanced too near, with one of his generals,\* named Lieven, who was dressed in a blue coat, trimmed with gold, and being afraid that the general would be too easily distinguished, he ordered him to walk behind him; prompted to it by that magnanimity which was so natural to him, and which prevented him from reflecting, that he exposed his own life to imminent danger to save that of his subject. Lieven saw too late the error of putting on a remarkable dress, which endangered all those who were near him; and fearing equally for the king in any place whatever, hesitated whether he should obey: in the midst of this contest, the king took him by the arm, and placing himself before him, entirely screened him; but at this instant a volley of cannon, which came in flank, struck the general dead on the spot which the king had scarcely quit-

\* In the first editions it was said that this general was in scarlet, but the chaplain Norbeg has so well proved that his uniform was blue, that we have corrected this error.

ted. The death of this man, killed exactly in his stead, and because he had endeavoured to save him, contributed not a little to confirm him in the opinion, which he entertained throughout his life, of an absolute predestination; and made him believe that his fate, which had preserved him in so singular a manner, had reserved him for the execution of yet greater things.

Every thing succeeded with him: his negotiations and his arms were equally happy. He was present, as it were, in every part of Poland; for his grand Mareschal Renschild was in the heart of the kingdom, with a large body of troops; about thirty thousand Swedes, under different generals, spread to the north and east over the frontiers of Muscovy, withstood the efforts of the whole Russian empire; and Charles himself was in the west, at the other end of Poland, at the head of his choicest troops.

The king of Denmark, tied up by the treaty of Travendal, which his weakness had prevented him from breaking, remained silent. This monarch, always prudent, did not dare to discover his disgust at seeing the king of Sweden so near his dominions. At a greater distance towards the south-west lay the duchy of Bremen, between the rivers Elbe and Weser, the most remote territory of the ancient Swedish conquests, filled with strong garrisons, and opening to the conqueror a free passage into Saxony and the empire. Thus, from the German ocean almost to the mouth of the Boristhenes, comprehending the whole breadth of Europe, and even to the gates of Moscow, all was in consternation, and on the point of a general revolution. His ships, masters of the Baltick sea, were employed to transport into Sweden the prisoners he had made in Poland. Sweden, tranquil in the midst of these great commotions, enjoyed a profound peace, and shared in the glory of its king without bearing the burdens of war, as the victorious troops were paid and maintained at the expense of the conquered.

In this general silence of the north before the arms of Charles XII., the town of Dantzick dared to displease him.

Fourteen frigates and forty transports were bringing the king a reinforcement of six thousand men, with cannon and ammunition, to begin the siege of Thorn. It was necessary for these succours to pass the Vistula. At the mouth of this river is Dantzick, a free and wealthy town, which enjoys, with Thorn and Elbing, the same privileges in Poland that the imperial towns possess in Germany. Its liberty has been alternately attacked by the Danes, the Swedes, and several princes of Germany, and nothing has preserved it but the mutual jealousy of those powers. Count Steinbock, one of the Swedish generals, assembled the magistrates in the king's name, and demanded passage for the troops and ammunition. The magistrates, with an imprudence common to those who treat with a superior power, were afraid either to refuse, or absolutely to grant his request. The general, however, obliged them to grant him more than he had at first demanded; and even laid the town under a contribution of a hundred thousand crowns, by which means he made them pay for their imprudent hesitation. At last, the reinforcement, cannon, and ammunition, having arrived before Thorn, they began the siege the 22d of September.

Robel, governor of this place, defended it for a month with a garrison of five thousand men; at the end of which time he was obliged to surrender at discretion. The garrison was made prisoners of war, and sent into Sweden. Robel was presented to the king disarmed. That prince, who never lost an opportunity of honouring merit in his enemies, gave him a sword with his own hand, made him a considerable present in money, and dismissed him on his parole. The honour which the town of Thorn derived from having formerly given birth to Copernicus, the founder of the true system of the globe, was of no service to it with a conqueror too little acquainted with these subjects, and who had not yet learned to reward any thing but valour. But this poor and paltry town was condemned to pay forty thousand crowns; an excessive contribution for such a place.

Elbing, built on an arm of the Vistula, founded by the



Teutonic knights, and annexed likewise to Poland, did not profit by the fault of the Dantzickers, but hesitated too long about giving passage to the Swedish troops. It was still more severely punished than Dantzick. Charles entered Elbing the 13th of Dec. at the head of four thousand men, with the bayonets fixed to the ends of their fuses. The inhabitants, struck with terror, threw themselves on their knees in the streets, and begged for mercy. He had them all disarmed, quartered his soldiers upon the citizens, and then, having sent for the magistracy, he exacted, that very day, a contribution of two hundred and sixty thousand crowns. There were in the town two hundred pieces of cannon, and four hundred thousand weight of powder, which he seized. A battle gained could not have procured him so many advantages.

All these successes were the forerunners to the dethroning the king of Poland.

Scarcely had the cardinal sworn to his king that he would attempt nothing against him, than he repaired to the assembly at Warsaw, always under the pretext of peace. He arrived, speaking of nothing but of concord and obedience, though he was accompanied by a number of soldiers whom he had raised on his own estate. At last he threw off the mask, and on the 14th of February, 1704, in the name of the assembly, declared "Augustus, elector of Saxony, incapable of wearing the crown of Poland." They all pronounced with one voice, the throne to be vacant. The wish of the king of Sweden, and consequently that of the diet, was to give to Prince James Sobiesky the throne of the king his father, King John. James Sobiesky was, at this time, at Breslaw in Silesia, waiting with impatience for the crown which his father had worn. He was one day hunting, with Prince Constantine, one of his brothers, a few miles from Breslaw, when thirty Saxon horsemen, secretly sent by King Augustus, rushing suddenly out of a neighbouring wood, surrounded the two princes, and carried them off without resistance. Fresh horses had been prepared, on which they

were conducted to Leipsick, and there closely confined. This stroke deranged the measures of Charles, the cardinal, and the whole assembly of Warsaw.

Fortune, who sports with crowned heads, placed almost at the same instant Augustus in danger of being nearly taken himself. He was at table, three leagues from Cracow, relying upon an advanced guard, posted at some distance, when General Renschild appeared, after having carried off his guard. The king of Poland had but just time to mount his horse, with ten others. General Renschild pursued him for three days, on the point of seizing him every moment. The king fled as far as Sendomir, the Swedish general still pursuing him; and it was only by singular good fortune that this prince escaped.

During all this time, Augustus's party and that of the cardinal treated each other as traitors. The army of the crown was divided between these two factions. Augustus, at last, forced to accept of support from the Muscovites, repented that he had not had recourse to them sooner. One time he fled into Saxony, where his resources were exhausted; then he returned to Poland, where no one dared to assist him. On the other hand, the king of Sweden, victorious and tranquil, reigned over Poland more absolutely than Augustus had ever done.

Count Piper, who had a mind as much formed for politics as his master's was for true greatness, now proposed to Charles XII. that he should himself take the crown of Poland. He represented to him how easy it might be done, with a victorious army, and a powerful party in the heart of the kingdom already subdued. He tempted him with the title of "Defender of the Evangelical Religion," a name which flattered the ambition of Charles. It would be easy, he said, to do in Poland what Gustavus Vasa had done in Sweden—to establish Lutheranism, and to break the chains of the people, already enslaved by the nobility and clergy. Charles was tempted for a moment; but glory was his idol. To that he sacrificed his own interest, and the pleasure he

would have enjoyed in taking Poland from the pope. He told Count Piper that he was more flattered by giving than gaining kingdoms : and added, smiling, “you was intended for the minister of an Italian prince.”

Charles was still near Thorn, in that part of royal Prussia which belongs to Poland ; from whence he extended his views to what was passing at Warsaw, and kept the neighbouring powers in awe. Prince Alexander, brother to the two Sobieskies who were carried into Silesia, came and implored his assistance to revenge his wrongs. Charles granted his request so much the more readily, as he imagined he could revenge himself at the same time. But impatient to give a king to Poland, he proposed to Prince Alexander his mounting the throne, from which fortune seemed determined to exclude his brother. Charles little expected a refusal ; but Prince Alexander told him, that nothing should ever engage him to profit by the misfortunes of his elder brother. The king of Sweden, Count Piper, all his friends, and particularly the young palatine of Posnania, Stanislaus Leczinsky, pressed him to accept the crown : he was resolute. The neighbouring princes heard with astonishment this uncommon refusal, and knew not which to admire most, a king of Sweden who at twenty-two years of age gave away the crown of Poland, or Prince Alexander who refused it.



## BOOK III.

**ARGUMENT.**—Stanislaus Leczinsky elected king of Poland.—Death of the cardinal primate.—Skilful retreat of General Schulembourg.—Exploits of the czar.—Foundation of Petersburg.—Battle of Frauenstad.—Charles enters Saxony.—Peace of Altranstadt.—Augustus abdicates the crown in favour of Stanislaus.—General Patkul, the czar's plenipotentiary, is broke upon the wheel and quartered.—Charles receives the ambassadors of foreign princes.—Visits Augustus.

YOUNG Stanislaus Leczinsky was, at this time, deputed by the assembly of Warsaw to make a report to the king of Sweden of several differences which had arisen during the absence of Prince James. Stanislaus had a happy countenance, full of boldness and sweetness, with an air of probity and frankness, which of all external advantages is the greatest, and gives more force to words than even eloquence itself. The wisdom with which he discoursed of the King Augustus, the assembly, the cardinal primate, and of the different interests which divided Poland, struck Charles. King Stanislaus did me the honour to relate to me, that he said to the king of Sweden, in Latin, "How can we proceed to an election, if the two princes, James and Constantine Sobiesky, are captives?" and that Charles made answer, "How can we deliver the republic, if we do not make an election?" This conversation was the only intrigue that placed Stanislaus on the throne. Charles prolonged the conference, that he might the better sound the genius of the young deputy. After the audience, he said aloud, that till then he had not seen a man so proper to reconcile all parties. He made no delay in informing himself of the character of the Palatine Leczinsky. He learnt that he was full of bravery, and inured to fatigue; that he accustomed himself to sleep on a straw mattress, and would not have any of his domestics to attend his person; that he observed a temperance not common to that climate, possessed great economy, was adored by his vassals, and the only lord, perhaps, in Poland, who had any friends at

a time when men acknowledged no ties but those of interest and faction. This character, which in several things accorded with his own, determined him entirely; and at the end of the conference he said aloud, "There is the man that shall always be my friend;" which words they soon perceived signified, "There is the man that shall be king."

Charles, who had taken his resolution on the instant, could not have found, in all Poland, a man more proper to reconcile all parties than the person he had chosen. The leading features of his character were humanity and benevolence. When Stanislaus was afterwards withdrawn into the dutchy of Deux Ponts, some partizans who had formed a design of carrying him off were taken in his presence. "What have I done to you," said he to them, "that you would deliver me to my enemies? Of what country are you?" Three of these adventurers replied that they were Frenchmen. "Well, then," said he, "be like your countrymen, whom I esteem, and be incapable of a vile action." When he had finished speaking, he gave them all that he had about him, his money, watch, and gold box, and they quitted him with tears and with admiration. This I know from two ocular witnesses.

I can say, with the same certainty, that one day as he was arranging the state of his household, he put upon the list a French officer who was attached to him. The treasurer asked in what quality his majesty chose he should be upon the list. "In quality of my friend," said the prince.

I have seen a long work which he had composed, to reform, if it had been possible, the laws and manners of his country. In this writing he makes a sacrifice of the privileges of the nobility to which he belonged, and of the royal prerogative which had been given to him, to the public good, and to the necessities of the people; a sacrifice which is more glorious than the gaining of battles.

When the primate of Poland found that Charles XII. had nominated the Palatine Leczinsky, as Alexander had nominated Abdalonimus, he repaired to the king of Sweden, to endeavour to make him change this resolution, as he wished to

give the crown to one Lubomirsky. "But what have you to allege against Stanislaus Leczinsky?" said the conqueror. "Sire," said the primate, "he is too young." To which the king drily replied, "he wants but little of my age;" turned his back upon the prelate, and immediately sent the Count de Hoorn to signify to the assembly of Warsaw, that it was necessary to elect a king in five days, and that they must also elect Stanislaus Leczinsky. The Count de Hoorn arrived the 7th of July, and fixed the day of election on the 12th, in the same manner as he would have ordered the decampment of a battalion. The cardinal primate, disappointed of the fruit of so many intrigues, returned to the assembly, and exerted his whole strength to set aside an election in which he had no part. But the king of Sweden arriving at Warsaw incognito, obliged him, for that time, to be silent. All that the primate could now do was not to be present at the election; and as he could neither oppose the conqueror, nor was willing to second him, he confined himself to an useless neutrality.

Saturday, the 12th of July, the day fixed for the election, being come, they assembled at three o'clock in the afternoon at Colo, the place appointed for this ceremony; the bishop of Posnania came and presided at the assembly, in the place of the cardinal primate. He arrived attended by several gentlemen of the party. The Count de Hoorn and two other general officers assisted publicly at this solemnity, as ambassadors extraordinary from Charles to the republic. The session lasted till nine in the evening, when the bishop of Posnania finished it by declaring, in the name of the diet, Stanislaus elected king of Poland; they instantly threw up their hats into the air, and the noise of their acclamations drowned the cries of the opposers.

It was of no service to the cardinal primate, or to those who were willing to remain neuter, to absent themselves from the election: they were obliged the next day to attend and perform homage to their new king. He received them as if he had been perfectly satisfied with their conduct; but



the greatest mortification they underwent, was that of being compelled to follow him to the quarters of the king of Sweden. That prince rendered to the sovereign he had just made all the honours due to a king of Poland; and to give a greater weight to his new dignity, he assigned him both money and troops.

Charles XII. departed immediately from Warsaw, to finish the conquest of Poland. He had ordered his army to rendezvous before Leopold, the capital of the great palatinate of Russia, a place important in itself, and still more so by the riches with which it was filled. It was imagined that it would have held out fifteen days, on account of the fortifications which Augustus had built there. The conqueror sat down before it on the 5th of September, and the next day took it by assault. All who dared to resist were put to the sword. The troops, victorious and masters of the town, did not separate themselves to run to pillage, notwithstanding the great treasures which were in Leopold. They arranged themselves in order of battle in the great square. There, those who remained in the garrison came and surrendered themselves prisoners of war. The king caused it to be published by the sound of trumpet, that all those inhabitants who had any effects belonging to Augustus or his adherents, should bring them to him before the close of the day, on pain of death. The measures were so well taken, that few dared to disobey; and four hundred chests, filled with gold and silver coin, plate, and other valuable things, were brought to the king.

The beginning of the reign of Stanislaus was distinguished almost at the same time by an event widely different. Some affairs which absolutely demanded his presence had obliged him to remain at Warsaw. He had with him his mother, his wife, and two daughters. In this confusion he had nearly lost his second daughter, who was but one year old. She had been carried away by her nurse, who had lost her way, and he found her in the manger of a stable in a neighbouring village, where she had been abandoned. It was this

very infant whom fate, after still greater vicissitudes, elevated to be queen of France.

The cardinal primate, the bishop of Posnania, and some grandees of Poland, composed his new court. It was guarded by six thousand Poles of the army of the crown, who had lately entered into his service, but whose fidelity had not as yet been proved. General Hoorn, governor of the town, had not more than fifteen hundred Swedes with him. There was a profound tranquillity at Warsaw, and Stanislaus proposed to depart in a few days for the conquest of Leopold; when all on a sudden, he was informed that a numerous army was approaching the town. It was King Augustus, who, by a new effort, and one of the most skilful marches that ever general made, had deceived the king of Sweden, and was coming with twenty thousand men to fall upon Warsaw, and to carry off his rival.

Warsaw was very ill fortified; the Polish troops who were to defend it, were not to be relied on; and Augustus having spies in the town, Stanislaus must have perished had he remained there. He accordingly sent back his family into Posnania, under a guard of Polish troops, such as he had most confidence in. The cardinal primate fled among the first to the frontiers of Prussia; many of the nobles took different roads; as for the new king, he immediately set out to find Charles XII., learning, at an early period, to suffer disgrace, and forced to quit the capital, of which he had been but six weeks before elected sovereign. The bishop of Posnania was the only person who could not escape; he was confined by a dangerous distemper in Warsaw. Part of the six thousand Poles followed Stanislaus, the rest escorted his family. Such whose fidelity it was not judged prudent to expose to the temptation of returning to the service of Augustus, were sent into Posnania. As for General Hoorn, who was governor of Warsaw for the king of Sweden, he remained with his fifteen hundred Swedes in the castle.

Augustus entered into his capital as a sovereign irritated and triumphant. The inhabitants before laid under contri-

bution by the king of Sweden, were still more hardly treated by Augustus. The cardinal's palace, and all the houses of the confederate lords, with all their wealth, both in town and country, were given to pillage. What was the most surprising in this sudden revolution was, that the pope's nuncio, who came with King Augustus, demanded, in the name of his master, that they should deliver up to him the bishop of Posnania, as subject to the church of Rome, in the quality of a bishop, and the favour of a prince placed on the throne by the arms of a Lutheran.

The court of Rome, which has always strove to augment its temporal power by means of its spiritual, had, a long time since, established in Poland a kind of jurisdiction, at the head of which is the pope's nuncio. Its minister's never let slip any favourable opportunity to extend their power: a power revered by the multitude, but always opposed by those of more wisdom. They attributed to themselves a right to judge of all ecclesiastical causes; and, in times of trouble, had usurped several other prerogatives, in which they maintained themselves till about the year 1728, when these abuses were corrected; abuses, such as are never reformed till they become absolutely intolerable. Augustus, happy in any opportunity of punishing the bishop of Posnania with decorum, and, at the same time, desirous to please the court of Rome, against which at any other time he would have exerted himself, delivered the Polish prelate into the hands of the nuncio. The bishop, after beholding his house pillaged, was carried by the soldiers to the house of the Italian minister, and from thence sent into Saxony, where he died. Count de Hoorn sustained, in the castle, where he was shut up, the continual fire of the enemy; till the place being no longer able to hold out, he surrendered himself prisoner of war, together with his fifteen hundred Swedes. This was the first advantage that Augustus had, during the torrent of his bad fortune, over the victorious army of his enemy.

This last effort was the blaze of a fire that was just going out. His troops, who were assembled in haste, consisted of



Poles, ready to abandon him on the first misfortune ; of Saxon recruits who had never till then seen any thing of war ; of vagabond Cossacks, more fit to plunder the conquered than to conquer ; and all of them trembled at the very name of the king of Sweden.

That conqueror, accompanied by King Stanislaus, went to seek his enemy, at the head of his choicest troops. The Saxon army fled every where before him. The towns for thirty miles round sent him their keys ; nor was there a day which was not signalized by some advantage. Success became too familiar to Charles. He said, "it was rather going to hunt, than going to war," and complained that his victories cost him so little.

Augustus entrusted the command of his army for some time to Count de Schulembourg, a very able general, but who had need of all his experience at the head of a dispirited army. He studied more to preserve his master's troops, than to conquer. He carried on the war by stratagem, the two kings pushed it with vigour. He stole several marches upon them, took possession of some advantageous posts, and sacrificed part of his cavalry to give his infantry time to make a sure retreat.

After many feints and countermarches, he found himself near Punitz, in the palatinate of Posnania, thinking that Stanislaus and the king of Sweden were at fifty leagues distance from him. He learned upon his arrival, that the two kings had marched those fifty leagues in nine days, and that they were come to attack him with ten or twelve thousand horse. Schulembourg had but eight thousand foot and a thousand horse.

It was necessary to maintain himself against a superior army, against the name of the king of Sweden, and against the natural fear with which so many defeats had naturally inspired the Saxons. He had always maintained, against the opinions of the German generals, that infantry was able to resist cavalry in the open field, even without the assistance of chevaux-de-frise ; and he this day made the experiment

against a victorious cavalry, commanded by the two kings, and by the choicest of the Swedish generals. He posted himself so advantageously, that he could not be surrounded. The first rank, armed with pikes and fusees, knelt down with one knee upon the ground; and the soldiers placed closely together, presented to the enemy's horse a kind of rampart, pointed with pikes and bayonets; the second rank inclined a little over the shoulders of the first; and the third, standing upright, fired at the same time from behind the other two. The Swedes, with their usual impetuosity, pressed down upon the Saxons, who expected them with firmness: the fire of the fusees, together with the points of the pikes and bayonets, maddened their horses, who began to rear instead of advancing. By these means the Swedes attacked in disorder, and the Saxons defended themselves by keeping their ranks.

If Charles had dismounted his cavalry, Schulembourg's army must have been routed without resource. This was the chief apprehension of that general, who expected that his enemy would take this resolution every moment; but neither the king of Sweden, who had so often put in practice all the stratagems of war, nor any of his generals, conceived this idea. This unequal combat of a body of cavalry against infantry, continued with frequent interruptions, and resumed attacks, near three hours. The Swedes lost more horses than men. Schulembourg gave ground at last, but his troops were not broken. He formed them into an oblong square; and though he was wounded in five places, he in this form maintained an orderly retreat in the middle of the night, into the little town of Gurau, about three leagues from the field of battle. But he had scarcely begun to breathe in this place, when the two kings suddenly appeared after him.

Beyond Gurau, in marching towards the river Oder, was a thick wood, by leading them through which the Saxon general saved his fatigued infantry. The Swedes, without hesitation, pursued them through the wood, advancing with

difficulty through paths scarcely passable by foot-travellers. The Saxons had not crossed the wood above five hours before the Swedish cavalry. On the other side of this wood runs the river Parts, at the foot of a village named Rutsen. Schulembourg had sent for boats to be immediately assembled, who carried over his troops, of which half were destroyed. Charles arrived at the same time that Schulembourg had reached the opposite shore. Never did a conqueror pursue his enemy so vigorously. The reputation of Schulembourg depended upon his escaping from the king of Sweden: the king of Sweden, on his side, imagined his glory interested in taking Schulembourg, and the remains of his army: he lost no time, but made his cavalry swim over. The Saxons found themselves shut up between this river of Parts and the great river of the Oder, which takes its source in Silesia, and is very deep and rapid at this place.

The destruction of Schulembourg appeared inevitable: he attempted, however, to extricate himself from this extremity by one of those strokes of art which are equivalent to victories, and which are so much the more glorious as fortune has no share in them. He had no more than four thousand men remaining: upon his right was a mill, which he filled with his grenadiers; upon his left, a marsh; a ditch lay before him; and his rear-guard was upon the banks of the Oder. He had no pontoons for passing the river, but so early as the evening before, he had ordered floats to be prepared. Charles the moment of his arrival attacked the mill; persuaded, that as soon as it was taken, the Saxons must either perish in the river or in the field, or that at least they must surrender at discretion, together with their general. However, the floats were ready, the Saxons passed the Oder by favour of the night, and when Charles had forced the mill, he no longer found the enemy's army. The two kings bestowed their encomiums upon this retreat, which is to this day spoken of with admiration in the empire, and Charles could not prevent himself from saying, "Schulembourg has conquered us to-day;" but what covered Schulembourg with honour



scarcely proved of any service to Augustus. That prince abandoned Poland once more to his enemies : he retired into Saxony, and prepared with precipitation the fortifications of Dresden ; being afraid, and not without reason, for the capital of his hereditary dominions.

Charles XII. now beheld Poland reduced to subjection ; and his generals, following their king's example, had just beat in Courland several small bodies of the Muscovites, who, since the great battle of Narva, had only shown themselves in small parties, and made war in those quarters like the vagabond Tartars, who pillage, fly, and then return only to fly again.

Wherever the Swedes came, they imagined themselves sure of a victory, even when they were only twenty to a hundred. At this happy conjuncture, Stanislaus prepared for his coronation. Fortune, who had elected him at Warsaw, and who had also driven him thence, again recalled him thither, amidst the acclamations of a crowd of nobility, whom the fortune of war had attached to him. A diet was there convened, and every obstacle removed ; nor were there any but the court of Rome who opposed him.

It was natural for Rome to declare for King Augustus, who from a protestant had become a catholic, that he might mount the throne ; and against Stanislaus, placed on the same throne by the great enemy of the catholic religion. Clement XII., at that time pope, sent briefs to every prelate of Poland, and above all to the cardinal primate, by which he threatened excommunication to those who dared to assist at the consecration of Stanislaus, or attempt any thing against the rights of King Augustus.

If these briefs were delivered to the bishops who were at Warsaw, it was to be feared that some would obey through weakness ; and that the greater part, availing themselves of the circumstance, would render themselves more troublesome, as they were the more necessary. Every precaution was therefore used, that the letters of the pope should not be received in Warsaw. However, a Franciscan received

the briefs secretly, in order that he might deliver them into the prelate's hands. He immediately gave one to the suffragan of Chelm: this prelate, who was strongly attached to Stanislaus, carried it to the king unopened. The king caused the monk to be brought to him, and asked him how he dared to take charge of such a business. The Franciscan replied, that it was by order of his general. Stanislaus desired him for the future, to mind the orders of his king in preference to those of the general of the Franciscans; and instantly banished him the town.

The same day a placard was published by the king of Sweden, by which it was forbidden, under the most grievous penalties, to all ecclesiastics, secular as well as regular, then in Warsaw, to meddle with the affairs of state. For greater security, he had guards planted at the gates of every prelate, and forbade any stranger to enter the town. He took upon himself these little severities, in order that Stanislaus should not quarrel with the clergy at his accession. He said, that he relaxed himself from his military fatigues in stopping the intrigues of the Romish court, and that he must fight against that with paper, when he was obliged to attack other sovereigns with real arms.

The cardinal primate was solicited by Charles and Stanislaus to come and perform the ceremony of the coronation. But as he did not imagine himself obliged to quit Dantzick to consecrate a king whom he did not wish to have been elected, and as his policy was never to do any thing without a pretext, he resolved to provide a lawful excuse for his refusal. He, therefore, caused the pope's brief to be fixed in the night-time to the gate of his own house. The magistrates of Dantzick, struck with the indignity, made strict search after the offenders, but they were never found. The primate feigned to be irritated, but nevertheless was well satisfied. He had now a pretext for not consecrating the new king; and at the same time kept fair with Charles XII., Augustus, Stanislaus, and the pope. He died a few days after, leaving his country in a dreadful confusion, and had gained no ad-

vantage by all his intrigues, but that of embroiling himself at once with the three kings, Charles, Augustus, and Stanislaus, with the republic, and with the pope, who had ordered him to repair to Rome, to give an account of his conduct : but as even politicians have sometimes remorse in their last moments, he wrote to King Augustus, on his death bed, beseeching his pardon.

The consecration was performed with tranquillity and magnificence, the 4th of October, 1705, in the city of Warsaw, notwithstanding the custom which subsists in Poland of crowning the kings at Cracow. Stanislaus Leczinsky and his wife Charlotta Opalinska were consecrated king and queen of Poland by the hands of the archbishop of Leopold, assisted by several other prelates. Charles XII. saw the ceremony incognito, the only advantage he reaped from his conquests.

While he was giving a king to the conquered Poles, and Denmark did not dare to trouble him ; while the king of Prussia sought his friendship, and Augustus was withdrawing himself to his hereditary dominions ; the czar was becoming every day more and more formidable. He had but weakly supported Augustus in Poland ; but he had made powerful diversions in Ingria.

As for him, he not only begun to be a good soldier himself, but he likewise taught the art of war to the Muscovites ; discipline was established throughout his troops ; he had good engineers, an artillery well served, and many good officers ; and he likewise knew the great art of subsisting his armies. Some of his generals had learned both how to fight, and as occasion required to decline fighting ; besides, he formed a navy capable of making head against the Swedes in the Baltick.

Confiding in all these advantages entirely owing to his own genius, and the absence of the king of Sweden, he took Narva by assault the 21st of August, in the year 1704, after a regular siege, and after he had prevented its receiving any succours, either by sea or land. The soldiers, once masters of the



town, ran to pillage, and abandoned themselves to the most enormous barbarities. The czar ran on every side to stop the disorder and massacre; he snatched the women from the hands of the soldiers, who, after they had violated them, were going to cut their throats. He was even obliged to kill with his own hands several Muscovites, who would not obey his orders. They show to this day at Narva, in the town-house, the table upon which he laid his sword as he entered; and they repeat the words with which he addressed the citizens, who were assembled there: "It is not with the blood of the inhabitants that this sword is stained, but with that of the Muscovites, which I have shed to save your lives."

If the czar had always observed this humanity, he had been the first of men. He aspired to more than to destroy towns: he, at that time, was founding a city not far from Narva, in the middle of his new conquests; this was the city of Petersburg, which he has since made his residence, and the centre of commerce. It is situated between Finland and Ingria, in a marshy island, around which the Neva divides itself into several branches, before it falls into the Gulph of Finland: he himself drew the plan of the city, the fortress, and the harbour, the quays which embellish it, and the forts which defend its entrance. This island, uncultivated and desert, which was nothing but a heap of mud during the short summer of those climates, and in the winter a frozen pool, into which there was no entry but through pathless woods and deep morasses, and which had, till then, been the haunt of wolves and bears, was filled in 1703 with above three hundred thousand men, whom the czar had assembled from his dominions. The peasants of the kingdom of Astracan, and those who inhabit the frontiers of China, were transported to Petersburg. He was obliged to clear forests, to make roads, to drain marshes, and to raise banks, before he could lay the foundation of the city. Nature was forced in every thing. The czar was resolute to people a country which did not appear to be destined for men; neither the inundations which razed his works, the sterility of

the soil, the ignorance of the workmen, nor even the mortality, which destroyed two hundred thousand men in the beginning, could make him change his resolution. The town was founded amidst the obstacles which nature, the genius of the people, and an unhappy war, had raised against it. Petersburg had become a city in 1705, and its harbour was filled with ships. The emperor attracted strangers by his beneficence, distributing lands to some, giving houses to others, and welcoming every artist that came to civilize this savage climate. Above all, he had rendered Petersburg inaccessible to the efforts of his enemies. The Swedish generals, who frequently beat his troops in every other quarter, were not able to hurt this infant colony. It was tranquil in the midst of the war which surrounded it.

The czar, thus creating to himself new dominions, always held out his hand to Augustus, who was losing his; he persuaded him by General Patkul, who had lately entered into the service of Muscovy, and was then the czar's ambassador in Saxony, to come to Grodno, to confer with him once more on the unhappy state of his affairs. Augustus came there with some troops, accompanied by General Schulembourg, whose passage over the Oder had rendered him famous through the north, and in whom he placed his last hope. The czar arrived there, also followed by an army of 70,000 men. These two monarchs concerted new plans for carrying on the war. Augustus, being dethroned, was no longer afraid of irritating the Poles, by abandoning their country to the Muscovite troops. It was resolved that the army of the czar should divide itself into several bodies, to stop the king of Sweden at every step. It was at the time of this interview that Augustus renewed the order of the White Eagle; a weak resource to attach to his interest some Polish lords, more desirous of real advantages than of an empty honour, which becomes ridiculous when it is held of a prince who has nothing of a king but the name. The conference of the two kings finished in an extraordinary manner. The czar departed suddenly, and left his troops with his ally, to hasten

and crush a rebellion with which he was threatened in Astracan. Scarcely was he gone, before Augustus ordered Patkul to be arrested at Dresden. All Europe was surprised that he dared, against the law of nations, and in appearance against his own interest, to throw into prison the ambassador of the only prince who protected him.

The secret spring of this transaction, as a son of King Augustus did me the honour to tell me, was as follows : Patkul, proscribed in Sweden for having defended the privileges of Livonia, his native country, had been general to Augustus ; but his high and lofty spirit could ill accord with the haughtiness of General Fleming, the favourite of the king, who was more imperious and lofty than himself ; he, therefore, passed into the service of the czar, whose general he then was, and his ambassador at the court of Augustus. Possessed with a penetrating genius, he plainly perceived that the views of Fleming, and the chancellor of Saxony, were to propose a peace to the king of Sweden, at any price whatsoever. He immediately formed a design to prevent them, and to effect an accommodation between the czar and Sweden. The chancellor discovered his project, and obtained leave to seize his person. King Augustus told the czar that he was a traitor who betrayed them both. He was, however, no farther culpable than in having served his new master too well ; but an ill-timed service frequently meets with the punishment due to treason.

In the meantime, on one side, the seventy thousand Russians, divided into several small bodies, were burning and ravaging the lands of Stanislaus' adherents ; while, on the other, Schulembourg was advancing with fresh troops. The good fortune of the Swedes dispersed these two armies in less than two months. Charles XII. and Stanislaus attacked the separate bodies of the Muscovites, one after the other, with such spirit, that one Muscovite general was beat before he heard of the defeat of his companion.

No obstacle could stop the conqueror ; if he found a river between him and the enemy, Charles and his Swedes swam



across it. A party of Swedes took the baggage of Augustus, in which were two hundred thousand crowns of silver coined. Stanislaus seized eight hundred thousand ducats belonging to Prince Menzikoff, the Muscovite general. Charles, at the head of his cavalry, marched thirty leagues in twenty-four hours ; every soldier leading a horse in his hand, to mount when his own was weary. The Muscovites, terrified and reduced to a small number, fled in disorder beyond the Boristhenes.

While Charles was driving the Muscovites before him, even into the very heart of Livonia, Schulembourg repassed the Oder, and came at the head of twenty thousand men to give battle to the grand Marshal Renschild, who was esteemed the best general of Charles XII., and was called the Parmenio of this Alexander of the north. These two illustrious generals, who seemed to participate of the destiny of their masters, encountered each other near Punitz, in a place called Frauenstad, a spot already fatal to the troops of Augustus. Renschild had but thirteen battalions, and twenty-two squadrons, which made in all about ten thousand men. Schulembourg had double that number. It is remarkable, that he had in his army a body of six or seven thousand Muscovites, who had been long disciplined in Saxony, and were looked upon as veteran troops, who united the ferocity of the Muscovites to the German discipline. The battle of Frauenstad was fought the 12th of February, 1706 ; but this very General Schulembourg, who, with four thousand men, had, in some measure, baffled the fortune of the king of Sweden, sunk under that of General Renschild. The combat did not last a quarter of an hour. The Saxons did not resist a moment ; and the Muscovites threw down their arms as soon as they saw the Swedes : the panic was so sudden, and the disorder so great, that the conquerors found on the field of battle seven thousand loaded fuses, which the enemy had thrown down without firing. Never was defeat more sudden, more complete, or more disgraceful ; and yet no general ever made a finer disposition than Schu-

lembourg, even in the opinion of the Swedish generals, as well as of the Saxons, who saw in this day how little human prudence is mistress of events.

Among the prisoners they found an entire regiment of French. These unfortunate men had been taken by the Saxon troops in 1704, at the famous battle of Hochstet, so fatal to the grandeur of Louis XIV. They had entered since that, into the service of King Augustus, who had formed them into a regiment of dragoons, and had given the command to a Frenchman of the house of Joyeuse. The colonel was killed at the first, or rather the only charge of the Swedes, and the whole regiment was made prisoners of war. The same day these Frenchmen begged to serve Charles XII., and they were accordingly received into his service by a singular destiny, which reserved them once more to change their conqueror into their master.

With regard to the Muscovites, they begged their lives on their knees; but were inhumanly massacred, about six hours after the combat, to revenge the violences offered by their countrymen, and also that the Swedes might get rid of prisoners whom they knew not how to dispose of.

The king, upon his return to Lithuania, learned this fresh victory; but the satisfaction he received from it, was disturbed by a small degree of jealousy. He could not prevent himself from saying, "This is the last time that Renschild shall be compared with me."

Augustus now saw himself without resources; he had no place left him but Cracow, in which he was shut up with two regiments of Muscovites, two of Saxons, and some troops of the army of the crown, by whom he was even afraid of being delivered up to the conqueror; but his ruin was complete, when he learned that Charles XII. was at last entered into Saxony, on the first of September, 1706.

He had marched through Silesia, even without deigning to advertise the court of Vienna. Germany was alarmed. The diet of Ratisbon, which represents the empire, but whose resolutions are often as ineffectual as solemn, declared

the king of Sweden an enemy to the empire, if he passed the Oder with his army; which circumstance determined him to march the sooner into Germany.

At his approach, the villages were deserted, and the inhabitants fled on every side. Charles behaved here as at Copenhagen; he caused it every where to be published, that he was only come to give them peace, and that all those who would return home, and pay the contribution he demanded, should be treated as his proper subjects, but that the rest should be pursued without quarter. This declaration, from a prince who was never known to break his word, made those return in crowds who before had fled from fear. He pitched his camp at Altranstad, near the plain of Lutzen, a field famous for the victory and death of Gustavus Adolphus. He went to see the place where that great man was killed. When they had conducted him to the spot, "I have endeavoured," said he, "to live like him; God will grant me one day, perhaps, a death as glorious."

He sent orders from the camp to the states of Saxony to assemble, and transmit to him, without delay, the registers of the electoral finances. As soon as he had them in his power, and was informed justly of what Saxony was able to furnish, he taxed it at six hundred and twenty-five thousand rix dollars a month. Besides this contribution, the Saxons were obliged to furnish every Swedish soldier with two pounds of flesh, two pounds of bread, two pots of beer, and four sols a day, together with forage for their horses. The contributions thus regulated, the king established a new police to protect the Saxons from the insults of his own soldiers; he ordered, that in every town where he placed garrisons, the inn-keepers who quartered his soldiers should give certificates every month of their conduct, in default of which the soldier was not to have his pay. Besides this, inspectors went every fifteen days from house to house, to inform themselves whether the Swedes had committed any outrage; and they were likewise authorized to indemnify the inn-keeper, and punish the offender.



It is well known under what severe discipline the troops of Charles XII. were kept: that they never pillaged towns taken by assault, before they received permission; that they even then plundered in a regular manner, and left off at the first signal. The Swedes boast to this day of the discipline which they observed in Saxony, while the Saxons complain of the terrible outrages they committed; contradictions which it would be impossible to reconcile, were it not known how differently different men behold the same object. It was scarcely possible but that the conquerors would sometimes abuse their rights, as the conquered would take the slightest injuries for the most enormous outrages. One day, as the king was riding near Leipsick, a Saxon peasant came and threw himself at his feet, beseeching him to grant him justice on a grenadier, who had just taken from him what was designed for his family's dinner. The king immediately caused the soldier to be brought to him: "Is it true," said he, with a stern countenance, "that you have robbed this man?" "Sire," said the soldier, "I have not done him so much injury as you have done his master; you have taken from him a kingdom, I have taken from this fellow nothing but a turkey." The king gave the peasant ten ducats with his own hand, and pardoned the soldier for the wit and boldness of his reply; saying to him, "Remember, friend, that if I have taken a kingdom from Augustus, I have kept nothing to myself."

The great fair of Leipsick was held as usual; the merchants coming there in perfect security: they saw not one Swedish soldier in the fair; one would have said that the army of the king of Sweden was in Saxony only to preserve the safety of the country. He commanded throughout the electorate with a power as absolute, and a tranquillity as profound, as he did in Stockholm.

King Augustus, wandering in Poland, deprived at once of his kingdom and electorate, at last wrote a letter with his own hand to Charles XII., begging him to grant a peace. He secretly charged the Baron D'Imhoff, in conjunction with

M. Fingstein, refendary of the privy council, to carry this letter, and gave them both full powers, and a blank signed : "Go," said he to them, "endeavour to obtain for me reasonable and christian conditions." He was reduced to the necessity of concealing those overtures, and to decline the open mediation of any prince : for, being then in Poland at the mercy of the Muscovites, he had reason to fear that that dangerous ally, whom he was now going to abandon, would take vengeance on him for his submission to the conqueror. His two plenipotentiaries came to Charles's camp in the night-time, and had a private audience. The king, having read the letter, told them they should have his answer immediately; and accordingly retiring to his closet, he wrote as follows :

"I consent to give peace on the following conditions, in which it must not be expected that I ever will make the least alteration.

I. "That Augustus renounce forever the crown of Poland; that he acknowledge Stanislaus as lawful king; and that he promise never to think of remounting the throne, not even after the death of Stanislaus.

II. "That he cancel all other treaties, particularly those he had made with the Muscovites.

III. "That he honourably send back to my camp the princes Sobiesky, with the other prisoners whom he has taken.

IV. "That he deliver up all the deserters who have entered into his service, particularly John Patkul; and that he stop all proceedings against such as have deserted from his service and entered into mine."

This written answer he gave to Count Piper, with orders to settle the particulars with the plenipotentiaries of Augustus. These gentlemen were shocked at the severity of the proposals, and used all the little arts that men without power can employ, to mitigate, if possible, the rigour of the king. They had several conferences with Count Piper; but that minister answered all their arguments with this short reply : "Such is the will of the king, my master, and he never changes his resolution."

While these negotiations were carrying on in Saxony, fortune seemed to put Augustus in a condition to obtain more honourable terms, and to treat with his conqueror on a more equal footing.

Prince Menzikoff, generalissimo of the Muscovites, entered Poland with a body of thirty thousand men, at a time when Augustus not only did not desire their assistance, but even dreaded it. He had only with him some Polish and Saxon troops, making in all about six thousand men. With so small a body of troops, surrounded by the army of Prince Menzikoff, he had every thing to fear in case the negotiation should be discovered. He saw himself at once dethroned by his enemy, and in danger of being taken prisoner by his ally. In this delicate crisis, one of the Swedish generals, named Meyerfield, at the head of ten thousand men, appeared at Calish, near the palatinate of Posnania. Prince Menzikoff pressed Augustus to give them battle; who, being greatly embarrassed, delayed the engagement under various pretexts; for, though the enemy had but one third of his number, there were four thousand Swedes in Meyerfield's army, and that alone was sufficient to render the event doubtful. To attack the Swedes during the negotiations, and to lose the battle, was, in effect, to deepen the abyss in which he was already plunged. He resolved, therefore, to send a trusty servant to the general of the enemy, in order to give him some distant hints of the peace, and advise him to retreat. But this advice produced an effect contrary to what he expected. General Meyerfield thought they were laying a snare to intimidate him; and for that reason resolved to hazard the battle.

The Russians now, for the first time, conquered the Swedes in a pitched battle. This victory, which Augustus gained almost against his will, was entire and complete. In the midst of his bad fortune, he entered triumphant into Warsaw, formerly his flourishing capital, but then a dismantled and ruined town, ready to receive any conqueror, and to acknowledge the strongest for king. He was tempted to seize



upon this moment of prosperity to go with the Muscovite army to attack the king of Sweden in Saxony. But when he reflected that Charles XII. was at the head of an army hitherto invincible; that the Russians would abandon him on the first intelligence of the treaty he had begun; that his Saxon dominions, already drained of men and money, would be equally ravaged by the Swedes and Muscovites; that the empire, engaged in a war with France, could afford him no assistance; and that, in the end, he should be left without dominions, money, or friends; he thought it most advisable to comply with the terms the king of Sweden should impose. These became still more severe, when Charles heard that Augustus had attacked his troops during the negotiation. His resentment, and the pleasure of farther humbling an enemy who had just vanquished his forces, made him inflexible upon all the articles of the treaty. Thus the victory of Augustus served only to render his situation the more miserable; a circumstance which perhaps never happened to any one but himself.

He had just caused *Te Deum* to be sung at Warsaw, when Fingstein, one of his plenipotentiaries, arrived from Saxony with the treaty of peace, which deprived him of his crown. Augustus hesitated for a while, but at length signed it; and set out for Saxony, vainly hoping that his presence would soften the king of Sweden, and that his enemy perhaps would remember the ancient alliance of their families, and the affinity of blood that ran in their veins.

These two princes met for the first time without ceremony, in Count Piper's tent, at a place called Gutersdorff. Charles was as usual in his jack-boots, with a piece of black taffety tied round his neck, instead of a cravat; his clothes of coarse blue cloth, with gilt brass buttons. He had a long sword by his side, which had served him in the battle of Narva, and on the pommel of which he frequently leaned. The conversation turned wholly upon these jack-boots; Charles telling Augustus that he had not laid them aside for six years, except when he went to bed. These trifles were

the only subject of discourse between two kings, one of whom had just deprived the other of his crown; Augustus, especially, spoke with an air of complaisance and satisfaction, which princes and men accustomed to the management of great affairs, know how to assume amidst the most cruel mortifications. The two kings dined together twice. Charles always affected to give Augustus the right hand; but far from mitigating the rigour of his demands, he rendered them still more severe. It was, doubtless, a very mortifying thing for a sovereign to be forced to deliver up a general officer and a public minister. It was still a greater debasement to be obliged to send the jewels and archives of the crown to his successor Stanislaus. But what completed his degradation was, his being at last compelled to congratulate, on his accession to the throne, the man who was going to usurp his place. Charles required Augustus to write a letter to Stanislaus. The dethroned king endeavoured to evade the demand, but Charles insisted upon his writing the letter, and he was obliged to comply. Here follows an exact transcript of it, which I have seen. It is copied from the original, which is still in the possession of King Stanislaus.

“SIR AND BROTHER,

“We little imagined it would have been necessary to enter into a literary correspondence with your majesty; nevertheless, in order to please his majesty of Sweden, and to avoid the suspicion of our being unwilling to gratify his desire, we hereby congratulate you on your accession to the throne, and wish you may find in your native country more faithful subjects than we have left there. All the world will do us the justice to believe, that we have received nothing but the most ungrateful returns for our good offices, and that the greater part of our subjects seemed to have no other aim than to hasten our ruin. Wishing that you may never be exposed to the like misfortunes, we commit you to the protection of God.

“Your brother and neighbour,

DRESDEN, April 8, 1707

“AUGUSTUS, king.”

Augustus was obliged to give orders to all his magistrates no longer to style him king of Poland, and to erase this title, which he now renounced, from the public prayers. He was less averse to the release of the Sobieskies. These princes, upon quitting their prison refused to see him. But the sacrifice of Patkul was the severest of all. The czar of Muscovy, on the one hand, loudly demanded him back as his ambassador; and on the other, the king of Sweden, with the most terrible menaces in case of refusal, insisted that he should be delivered up to him. Patkul was then confined in the castle of Konigstein, in Saxony. Augustus thought he might easily gratify Charles XII., and save his own honour. He sent his guards to deliver this unhappy man to the Swedish troops; but he previously despatched a secret order to the governor of Konigstein, to let his prisoner escape. The bad fortune of Patkul defeated the pains that were taken to save him. The governor, knowing that Patkul was very rich, had a mind to make him purchase his liberty. The prisoner, still relying on the law of nations, and informed of the intentions of Augustus, refused to pay for that which he thought he had a title to obtain for nothing. The guards who were commissioned to seize the prisoner arrived during this interval, and immediately delivered him to four Swedish captains, who carried him forthwith to the general quarters at Altranstad, where he remained three months fastened to a stake with a heavy iron chain; from whence he was conducted to Casimir.

Charles, forgetting that Patkul was the czar's ambassador, and considering him only as his own subject, ordered a council of war to try him with the utmost rigour. He was condemned to be broken alive on the wheel, and then quartered. A chaplain came to inform him of the fatal sentence, without acquainting him with the manner in which it was to be executed. Patkul, who had braved death in so many battles, finding himself alone with a priest, and his courage being no longer supported by pride or passion, the sources of human intrepidity, poured a flood of tears into the chaplain's



bosom. He was betrothed to a Saxon lady, called Madam d'Enfiedel, a woman of birth, of merit, and of beauty, and whom he expected to have married about the time that he found himself condemned to die. He entreated the chaplain to wait upon her, to give her all the consolation in his power, and to assure her that he died full of the most tender affection for his incomparable mistress. When he was brought to the place of punishment, and beheld the wheel and stakes prepared for his execution, he fell into convulsions, and threw himself into the arms of the minister, who embraced him, covered him with his cloak, and wept over him. A Swedish officer then read aloud a paper to the following effect:

"This is to declare, that it is the express order of his majesty, our most merciful lord, that this man, who is a traitor to his country, be broke upon the wheel, and quartered, in order to atone for his crimes, and to be an example to others; that every one may beware of treason, and faithfully serve his king." At the words "our most merciful lord," Patkul cried out, "What mercy?" and at those of "traitor to his country"—"Alas! (said he) I have served it but too well." He received sixteen blows, and suffered the most excruciating tortures that can be imagined. Thus died the unfortunate John Reinold Patkul, ambassador and general of the emperor of Russia.

Those who looked upon him only as a rebel, said that he deserved death; but those who considered him as a Livonian, born in a province that had privileges to defend, and remembered that he had been banished from Livonia for no other reason than his having defended those privileges, called him a martyr to the liberty of his country. It was on all hands agreed, however, that the title of ambassador to the czar ought to have rendered his person sacred. The king of Sweden alone, educated in the principles of arbitrary power, thought that he had only performed an act of justice, whilst all Europe condemned his cruelty.

The mangled limbs of the sufferer remained exposed upon

gibbets till 1713, when Augustus having regained his throne, caused these testimonies of the necessity to which he had been reduced at Altranstad to be gathered together. They were brought to Warsaw in a box, and delivered to him in presence of the French envoy. The king of Poland, showing the box to this minister, only said, "These are the limbs of Patkul;" without adding any thing either to blame his conduct or to bewail his memory, and without any one daring to speak on so delicate and mournful a subject.

About this time, a Livonian named Paikel, an officer in the Saxon troops, who had been taken prisoner in the field, was condemned at Stockholm, by a decree of the senate; but his sentence was only to lose his head. This difference of punishments in the same case, made it but too plain that Charles, in putting Patkul to such a cruel death, was more anxious to avenge himself than to punish the criminal. Be that as it may, Paikel, after his condemnation, proposed to the senate to impart to the king the secret of making gold, on condition that he should obtain his pardon. He made the experiment in prison, in presence of Colonel Hamilton and the magistrates of the town; and whether he had actually discovered some useful secret, or which is more probable, had only acquired the art of deceiving with ability, they carried the gold which was found in the crucible to the mint at Stockholm, and gave the senate such a full, and seemingly such an important account of the matter, that the queen-dowager, Charles's grandmother, ordered his execution to be suspended till the king should be informed of this uncommon affair, and send his orders accordingly.

The king made answer, "That as he had refused the pardon of the criminal to the entreaties of his friends, he would never grant to interest what he had denied to friendship." This inflexibility had something in it very heroical in a prince, especially as he thought the secret practicable. Augustus, upon hearing this story, said, "I am not surprised at the king of Sweden's indifference about the philosopher's stone: he has found it in Saxony."

When the czar was informed of the strange peace which Augustus had, notwithstanding their former treaties, concluded at Altranstad; and that Patkul, his ambassador plenipotentiary, was delivered up to the king of Sweden, in contempt of the laws of nations; he loudly complained of these indignities to the several courts of Europe. He wrote to the emperor of Germany, to the queen of England, and to the states general of the United Provinces. He gave the terms of cowardice and treachery to the sad necessity to which Augustus had been obliged to submit. He conjured all these powers to interpose their mediation to procure the restoration of his ambassador, and to prevent the affront which, in his person, was going to be offered to crowned heads. He pressed them, by the motives of honour, not to debase themselves so far as to become guarantees of the treaty of Altranstad; a concession which Charles XII. meant to extort from them by his threatening and imperious behaviour. These letters had no other effect than to set the power of the king of Sweden in a stronger light. The emperor, England, and Holland, were then engaged in a ruinous war with France, and judged it a very unreasonable juncture to exasperate Charles XII. by refusing the vain ceremony of being guarantees to a treaty. With regard to the unhappy Patkul, there was not a single power which interposed its good offices in his behalf; from whence it appears what little confidence a subject ought to put in princes, and how much all the monarchs in Europe at that time stood in awe of the king of Sweden.

It was proposed in the council of the czar, to retaliate this cruelty on the Swedish officers who were prisoners at Moscow, but the czar would not consent to a barbarity which would have been attended with fatal consequences, as there were more Muscovites prisoners in Sweden, than Swedes in Muscovy.

He studied a more advantageous revenge. The main body of his enemy's army lay inactive in Saxony. Lewenhaupt, general of the king of Sweden, who was left in Poland with



about twenty thousand men, was not able to guard the passes into a country without forts and full of factions. Stanislaus was in the camp of Charles. The emperor of Muscovy seized this opportunity, and re-entered Poland with above 60,000 men. These he divides into several bodies, and marches with a flying camp to Leopold, where there was no Swedish garrison. All the towns of Poland yield to any one who appears before their gates at the head of an army. He caused an assembly to be convoked at Leopold, of much the same nature with that which had dethroned Augustus at Warsaw.

Poland had at that time two primates, as well as two kings; the one nominated by Augustus, the other by Stanislaus. The primate nominated by Augustus, summoned the assembly of Leopold, to which they, whom that prince had abandoned by the peace of Altranstad, and such as were brought over by the money of the czar, immediately repaired. Here it was proposed to elect a new sovereign: so that Poland was upon the point of having three kings at once, without being able to say which was the real one.

During the conferences at Leopold, the czar, whose interest was closely connected with that of the emperor of Germany, on account of the common dread which they entertained of the power of the king of Sweden, secretly obtained from him a number of German officers, who daily arriving, increased his strength in a considerable degree, by bringing with them discipline and experience. These he engaged in his service by several instances of liberality; and the more to encourage his own troops, he gave his picture, set with diamonds, to all the general officers and colonels who had fought at the battle of Calish: the subaltern officers had medals of gold, and every private soldier a medal of silver. These monuments of the victory of Calish were all struck in the new city of Petersburg; where the improvement of the arts kept pace with the desire of glory, and spirit of emulation, which the czar had instilled into his troops.

The confusion, the multiplicity of factions, and the con-

tinual ravages prevailing in Poland, hindered the diet of Leopold from coming to any resolution. The czar therefore transferred it to Lublin. But the change of place did not lessen the disorder and perplexity in which the whole nation was involved. The assembly contented itself with neither acknowledging Augustus, who had abdicated the throne, nor Stanislaus, who had been elected against their will : but they were neither sufficiently united, nor had resolution enough to nominate another king. During these fruitless deliberations, the party of the Princess Sapieha, that of Oginsky, those who secretly adhered to Augustus, and the new subjects of Stanislaus, all made war upon one another, plundered each other's estates, and completed the ruin of their country. The Swedish troops commanded by Lewenhaupt, one part of which lay in Livonia, another in Lithuania, and a third in Poland, were daily in pursuit of the Russians, and set fire to every thing that opposed Stanislaus. The Russians ruined their friends and foes without distinction ; nothing was to be seen but towns reduced to ashes, and wandering troops of Poles, deprived of all their substance, and detesting alike their two kings, Charles XII., and the czar of Muscovy.

In order to quiet these commotions, and to secure the peaceable possession of the throne, Stanislaus set out from Altranstad on the fifteenth of July, 1707, accompanied by General Renschild, with sixteen Swedish regiments, and furnished with a large sum of money. He was acknowledged wherever he came. The discipline of his troops, which made the barbarity of the Muscovites to be more sensibly felt, conciliated the affections of the people. His extreme affability, in proportion as it was better known, reconciled to him almost all the different factions ; and his money procured him the greatest part of the army of the crown. The czar, apprehensive of wanting provisions in a country which his troops had laid waste, retired into Lithuania, where he had fixed the general rendezvous of his army, and where he resolved to establish magazines. This retreat left Stanislaus the undisturbed sovereign of almost all Poland.

The only person who gave him any uneasiness, was Count Siniausky, grand general of the crown, by the nomination of Augustus. This man, who was possessed of no contemptible talents, and entertained the most ambitious views, was at the head of a third party. He neither acknowledged Augustus nor Stanislaus; and, after having used his utmost efforts in order to procure his own election, contented himself with being the head of a third party, since he could not be king. The troops of the crown, which continued under his command, had no other pay but the liberty of pillaging their own country with impunity; and all those who had either suffered, or were apprehensive of suffering, from the rapacity of these freebooters, soon submitted to Stanislaus, whose power was gathering strength every day.

The king of Sweden was then in his camp at Altranstad, receiving ambassadors from almost all the princes in Christendom; some intreating him to quit the empire, others desiring him to turn his arms against the emperor; and it was then the general report, that he intended to join with France in humbling the house of Austria. Among these ambassadors came the famous John, duke of Marlborough, on the part of Anne, queen of Great Britain. This man, who never besieged a town which he did not take, nor fought a battle which he did not gain, was at St. James's a perfect courtier, in parliament the head of a party, and in foreign countries the most able negotiator of his time. He has done France as much mischief by his politics, as by his arms. Mr. Fagel, secretary of the states general, a man of the greatest merit, has been heard to say, that when the states general had more than once resolved to oppose the schemes which the duke was about to lay before them, the duke came, spoke to them in French, a language in which he expressed himself but very indifferently, and yet he brought them all over to his opinion. Of the truth of this story Lord Bolingbroke assured me.

In conjunction with Prince Eugene, the companion of his victories, and Heinsius, the grand pensionary of Holland, he



supported the whole weight of the war which the allies carried on against France. He knew that Charles was incensed against the empire and the emperor; that he was secretly solicited by the French; and that if this conqueror should espouse the cause of Louis XIV., the allies must be entirely ruined.

Charles, indeed, had given his word in 1700, that he would not intermeddle in the quarrel between Louis XIV. and the allies; but the duke of Marlborough could not believe that any prince would be so great a slave to his word, as not to sacrifice it to his grandeur and interest. He, therefore, set out from the Hague, with a resolution to sound the intentions of the king of Sweden. M. Fabricius, who then attended Charles XII., assured me, that the duke of Marlborough, on his arrival, applied secretly, not to Count Piper, the prime minister, but to Baron de Gortz, who now began to share with Piper the confidence of the king. He even went to the quarters of Charles XII. in the coach of this nobleman, where there passed some marks of coldness between the duke and Chancellor Piper; by whom, however, being afterwards presented, together with Robinson, the English minister, he spoke to the king in French. He told him, "that he should esteem it a singular happiness, to have an opportunity of learning, under his command, such parts of the art of war as he did not yet understand." To this polite compliment the king made no return, and seemed to forget that it was Marlborough who was speaking to him. He even thought, as I have been told, that the dress of this great man was too much studied, and that it had too little the air of a soldier. The conversation was tedious and embarrassing, Charles XII. speaking in the Swedish tongue, and Robinson serving as an interpreter. Marlborough, who was never in haste to make proposals, and who, by a long course of experience, had learned the art of diving into the real characters of men, and discovering the connection between their most secret thoughts and their actions, gestures, and discourse, regarded the king with the utmost attention.

When he spoke to him of war in general, he thought he perceived in his majesty a natural aversion to France; and remarked that he talked with pleasure of the conquests of the allies. He mentioned the czar to him, and observed that his eyes always kindled at the name, notwithstanding the calmness of the conversation. He remarked, besides, a map of Muscovy lying before him upon the table. He wanted no more to convince him that the real design and sole ambition of the king of Sweden was to dethrone the czar, as he had done the king of Poland. He was sensible, that if Charles remained in Saxony, it was only to impose some hard conditions on the emperor of Germany. He knew the emperor could make no resistance, and that thus all disputes would be easily accommodated. He left Charles, therefore, to follow the bent of his own mind; and, satisfied with having discovered his intentions, made him no proposals. These particulars I had from the duchess of Marlborough, his widow.

As few negotiations are finished without money, and as ministers are sometimes known to sell the hatred or favour of their masters, it was the general opinion throughout Europe, that the duke of Marlborough would not have succeeded so well with the king of Sweden, had he not made a handsome present to Count Piper, whose memory still labours under the imputation. For my own part, after having traced this report to its source, with all the care and accuracy of which I am master, I found that Piper received a small present from the emperor, by the hands of the Count de Wratissau, with the consent of his master, but nothing from the duke of Marlborough. Certain it is, Charles was so firmly resolved to dethrone the emperor of Russia, that he asked nobody's advice on that subject, nor wanted the instigation of Count Piper to prompt him to wreak his long meditated vengeance on the head of Peter Alexiowitz.

But what fully justifies the character of that minister, was the honour which, long after this period, was paid to his memory by Charles XII., who, having heard that Piper was dead in Russia, caused his body to be transported to Stockholm, and gave him a magnificent funeral at his own expense.

The king, who had not as yet experienced any reverse of fortune, nor even met with any interruption in his victories, thought one year would be sufficient for dethroning the czar ; after which, he imagined he might return, and set himself up as the arbiter of Europe. But, first of all, he resolved to humble the emperor of Germany.

Baron de Strahlenheim, the Swedish envoy at Vienna, had quarrelled at a public entertainment with the Count de Zobor, chamberlain of the emperor. The latter having refused to drink the health of Charles XII., and having declared that that prince had used his master very ill, Strahlenheim gave him at once the lie and a box on the ear, and besides this insult, boldly demanded a reparation from the imperial court. The fear of displeasing the king of Sweden obliged the emperor to banish his subject, whom he ought rather to have avenged. Charles was not satisfied with this condescension, but insisted that Count Zobor should be delivered up to him. The pride of the court of Vienna was forced to stoop. The count was put into the hands of the king, who sent him back, after having detained him some time a prisoner at Stettin. He likewise further demanded, contrary to the law of nations, that they should deliver up to him fifteen hundred unhappy Muscovites, who having escaped the fury of his arms, had fled into the imperial territories. The emperor was obliged to yield even to this strange demand ; and, had not the Russian envoy at Vienna dexterously given these unhappy wretches an opportunity of escaping by different roads, they must have been delivered into the hands of their enemies.

The third and last of his demands was the most extraordinary. He declared himself the protector of the emperor's protestant subjects in Silesia, a province belonging to the house of Austria, not to the empire. He insisted that the emperor should grant them the liberties and privileges which had been established by the treaties of Westphalia, but which were extinguished, or at least eluded, by those of Ryswick. The emperor, who wanted only to get rid of such a dangerous neighbour, yielded once more, and granted all he desi



red. The Lutherans of Silesia had above a hundred churches, which the catholics were obliged to cede to them by this treaty : but of many of these advantages which were now procured them by the king of Sweden's good fortune, they were afterwards deprived, when that prince was no longer in condition to impose laws.

The emperor who made these forced concessions, and complied in every thing with the will of Charles XII., was Joseph, the eldest son of Leopold, and brother to Charles VI., who since succeeded him. The pope's inter-nuncio, who then resided at the court of Joseph, reproached him in very severe terms, alleging that it was a most shameful condescension for a catholic emperor like him, to sacrifice the interest of his own religion to that of heretics. "You may think yourself very happy," replied the emperor, with a smile, "that the king of Sweden did not propose to make me become a Lutheran; for if he had, I do not know what I should have done."

The Count de Wratissau, his ambassador with Charles XII., brought to Leipsick the treaty in favour of the Silesians, signed with his master's hand; upon which Charles said, he was the emperor's best friend. He was far from being pleased, however, that the court of Rome should have employed all its arts and intrigues in order to traverse his scheme. He looked with the utmost contempt upon the weakness of that court; which, having one half of Europe for its irreconcilable enemy, and placing no confidence in the other, can only support its credit by the finesse of its negotiations; and yet he resolved to be revenged on his holiness. He told the Count de Wratissau, that "the Swedes had formerly subdued Rome, and had not degenerated like her." He sent the pope word, "that he would one day redemand the effects which Queen Christiana had left at Rome;" and it is hard to say how far this young conqueror would have carried his resentment and his arms, had fortune favoured his designs. At that time nothing appeared impossible to him. He had even sent several officers privately

into Asia and Egypt, to take plans of the towns, and to examine into the strength of these countries. Certain it is, that if any one had been able to overturn the empire of the Turks and Persians, and afterwards to pass into Italy, it had been Charles XII. He was as young as Alexander, as brave, as enterprising, more indefatigable, more robust, and more virtuous; the Swedes also were perhaps better soldiers than the Macedonians. But such projects, which are called divine when they succeed, are regarded only as chimerical when they fail of success.

At length, having removed every difficulty, and accomplished all his designs: having humbled the emperor, given laws in the empire, protected the Lutheran religion in the midst of the catholics, dethroned one king, and crowned another, and rendered himself the terror of all the princes around him, he began to prepare for his departure. The pleasures of Saxony, where he had remained inactive for a whole year, had not made the least alteration in his manner of living. He rode out thrice a-day, rose at four in the morning, dressed himself with his own hands, drank no wine, sat at table only a quarter of an hour, exercised his troops every day, and knew no other pleasure but that of making Europe tremble.

The Swedes were still ignorant whither their king intended to lead them. They had only a suspicion that he meant to go to Moscow. A few days before his departure, he ordered the quarter-master-general to give him in writing the route from Leipsick. At that word he paused a moment: and, lest the quarter-master should discover his project, he added with a smile—to all the capital cities of Europe. The quarter-master brought him a list of all these routes, at the head of which he placed, in great letters, “The route from Leipsick to Stockholm.” The generality of Swedes were extremely desirous of returning home; but the king was far from intending to lead them back to their native country. “Mr. Quarter-Master,” says he, “I plainly see whither you would lead me; but we shall not return to Stockholm so soon.”

The army was already on its march, and was passing by Dresden, when Charles, who was at the head of his men, always riding, as usual, two or three hundred paces before his guards, all of a sudden vanished from their sight. Some officers advanced at full gallop to see where he was. They ran to all parts, but could not find him. In a moment the alarm was spread over the whole army. The troops were ordered to halt; the generals assembled together, and were already in the utmost consternation. At length, they learned from a Saxon, who was passing by, what was become of the king.

As he was passing so near Dresden, he took it into his head to pay a visit to Augustus. He entered the town on horseback, followed by three or four general officers. The centries of the gate asked them their names. Charles said his name was Carl, and that he was a Draban; and all the rest took fictitious names. Count Fleming, seeing them pass through the town, had only time to run and inform his master. All that could possibly be done on such an occasion immediately presented itself to the mind of that minister, who suggested it to Augustus. But Charles entered the chamber in his boots, before Augustus had time to recover from his surprise. Augustus was then sick, and in his nightgown, but dressed himself in haste. Charles breakfasted with him, as a traveller who comes to take leave of his friend; and then expressed his desire of viewing the fortifications. During the short time he employed in walking around them, a Livonian, who had been condemned in Sweden, and now served in the Saxon army, imagining that he could never find a more favourable opportunity of obtaining his pardon, entreated Augustus to ask it of Charles; persuading himself, that his majesty would not refuse so small a favour to a prince from whom he had taken a crown, and in whose power he now seemed to be. Augustus readily undertook to make the request. He was then some distance from the king, and was conversing with Hord, a Swedish general. "I believe," said he, smiling, "your master will



not refuse me." "You do not know him," replied General Hord; "he is more likely to refuse you here than any where else." Augustus, however, did not fail to prefer the petition on very pressing terms; and Charles refused it in such a manner as to prevent a repetition of the request. After having passed some hours in this strange visit, he embraced Augustus, and departed. Upon rejoining his army, he found all his generals still in consternation. They told him they had determined to besiege Dresden if his majesty had been retained prisoner. "Right," said the king, "but they durst not." Next day, upon hearing the news, that Augustus held an extraordinary council at Dresden, "You will find," said Baron Strahlenheim, "they are deliberating upon what they should have done yesterday." A few days after, Renschild coming to wait upon the king, expressed his surprise at this unaccountable visit to Augustus. "I confided," said Charles, "in my good fortune; but I have seen the moment that might have been prejudicial to me. Fleming had no mind that I should leave Dresden so soon."

## BOOK IV.

**ARGUMENT.**—Charles quits Saxony.—Pursues the czar.—Penetrates into the Ukraine.—His losses.—Is wounded.—The battle of Pultowa.—Consequences of that battle.—Charles is forced to fly into Turkey.—His reception in Bessarabia.

CHARLES at length took leave of Saxony, in September, 1707, at the head of an army of forty-three thousand men, formerly covered with steel, but now shining with gold and silver, and enriched by the spoils of Poland and Saxony; every soldier carrying with him fifty crowns in ready money. The regiments were not only complete, but every company had several supernumeraries, who waited for vacancies. Besides this army, Count Lewenhaupt, one of his best generals, waited for him in Poland, with twenty thousand men. He had also another army of fifteen thousand in Finland; and fresh recruits were coming to him from Sweden. With all these forces, it was not doubted but that he would dethrone the czar.

That emperor was at that time in Lithuania, endeavouring to re-animate a party which Augustus appeared to have abandoned. His troops, divided into several bodies, fled on all sides, at the first news of the king of Sweden's approach. He had himself enjoined his generals never to wait for this conqueror with unequal forces; and he was accordingly obeyed.

The king of Sweden, in the midst of his victorious march, received an ambassador on the part of the Turk. This ambassador had his audience in the tent of Count Piper, in which all visits of ceremony were received. On these occasions, this minister supported the dignity of his master by the appearance of a little magnificence; while the king, who was always worse lodged, worse served, and more plainly dressed than the meanest officer in his army, used to say, that his palace was at Count Piper's. The Turkish ambassador presented Charles with a hundred Swedish soldiers, who, having been taken by the Calmucks, and sold in Tur-

key, had been purchased by the grand seignior, who had sent them back to the king, as the most acceptable present he could make him. Not that the Ottoman pride deigned to pay homage to the glory of Charles XII., but because the sultan, being the natural enemy of the emperors of Russia and Germany, was desirous to fortify himself against them by the friendship of Sweden, and the alliance of Poland. The ambassador complimented Stanislaus upon his accession to the throne; so that this king was in a short space of time acknowledged by Germany, France, England, Spain and Turkey. There remained only the pope, who deferred the acknowledgment till time should have settled on his head a crown, of which a sinister accident might deprive him.

Charles had scarce given audience to the Turkish ambassador, before he went in pursuit of the Muscovites. The Russians had quitted Poland, and returned to it above twenty different times during the course of the war. This country, which is open on all sides, and has no fortresses to cut off the retreat of an army, gave the Muscovites an opportunity of often revisiting the very spot where they had formerly been vanquished, and even of penetrating as far into the heart of the kingdom as the vanquisher. During Charles's stay in Saxony, the czar had advanced as far as Leopold, situated at the southern extremity of Poland; but was at this time at Grodno in Lithuania, a hundred leagues from Leopold.

Charles left Stanislaus in Poland to defend his new kingdom, with the assistance of ten thousand Swedes, and his own subjects, against his foreign and domestic enemies; while he put himself at the head of his cavalry, and marched, amidst frost and snow, to Grodno, in the month of January, 1708.

He had passed the Niemen, about two leagues from the town; before the czar knew any thing of his march. Upon the first news of the arrival of the Swedish army, however, the czar quitted the town by the north gate, and Charles entered it by the south, having only six hundred of his guards



with him, the rest not being able to keep pace with him. The czar fled with above two thousand men, apprehending that a whole army was entering Grodno. But being informed the same day by a Polish deserter, that he had abandoned the place to no more than six hundred men, and that the main body of the army was still five leagues distant, he lost no time in detaching fifteen hundred horse of his own troops, in the evening, to surprize the king of Sweden in the town. This detachment, under favour of the darkness, arrived undiscovered at the first Swedish guard, which, though consisting only of thirty men, sustained, for half a quarter of an hour, the efforts of the whole fifteen hundred. The king, who was at the other end of the town, flew to their assistance with the rest of his six hundred guards; upon which, the Russians fled with precipitation. His army was not long in joining him, when he set out in pursuit of the enemy. All the Russian troops dispersed through Lithuania retired hastily to the eastward, into the palatinate of Minsky, near the frontiers of Muscovy, their general rendezvous. The Swedes, whom the king had likewise divided into several bodies, continued to pursue the enemy for more than thirty leagues. Both the pursued and the pursuers made forced marches almost every day, though in the middle of winter. Indeed, all seasons of the year had long become indifferent to the soldiers, both of Charles and the czar; the terror struck by the name of King Charles, now making the only difference between the Russians and the Swedes.

From Grodno to the Boristhenes eastward, is a country of morasses, deserts, and immense forests. Even in the cultivated spots there are no provisions to be had, the peasants burying their grain, and whatever else can be so preserved, under ground. These subterraneous stores were discoverable only by boring the earth with iron augers: the Muscovites and the Swedes alternately making use of these provisions; but they were not always to be found, and even then were not sufficient.

The king of Sweden, who had foreseen these difficulties,

had provided biscuit for the subsistence of his army, so that nothing could stop his march. After having traversed the forest of Minsky, where he was constantly obliged to cut down the trees to clear the road for his troops and baggage, he found himself on the 25th of June, 1708, on the banks of the river Berezine, opposite to Borislow.

The czar had in this place assembled the best part of his forces, and intrenched himself to great advantage; his design being to hinder the Swedes from crossing the river. Charles posted some regiments on the banks of the Berezine, over against Borislow, as if he meant to attempt a passage in the face of the enemy. At the same time marching his army three leagues higher up the river, he threw a bridge across it, cut his way through a body of three thousand men, who defended that pass, and without halting, marched on toward the main body of the enemy. The Russians did not wait his approach, but decamped, and retreated toward the Boristhenes, breaking up the roads, and destroying every thing in their way, in order to retard the pursuit of the Swedes.

Charles surmounted all these obstacles, and advanced toward the Boristhenes. He was opposed in his march by twenty thousand Muscovites, intrenched at a place called Hollosin, behind a morass, which could not be approached without passing a river. Charles did not delay the attack till the rest of his infantry should arrive, but plunged into the water at the head of his guards, and crossed the river and the morass, the water frequently reaching above his shoulders. While he was thus pressing forward to the enemy, he ordered his cavalry to go round the morass, and attack them in flank. The Muscovites, astonished that no barrier could defend them, were instantly routed by the king, who attacked them on foot with his guards, and by the Swedish cavalry.

These having forced their way through the enemy, joined the king in the midst of the battle. He then mounted on horseback; but observing soon after a young Swedish gentleman, named Guillenstern, for whom he had a great



regard, wounded and unable to walk, he obliged him to take his horse, and continued to command on foot at the head of his infantry. Of all the battles he had fought, this was, perhaps, the most glorious; being that in which he encountered the greatest dangers, and displayed the most consummate skill and prudence. The memory of it is still preserved by a medal, with this inscription on one side, *Silvæ, Paludes, Aggeres, Hostes victi*: on the reverse the following verse of Lucan, *Victrices copias alium laturus in Orbem*.

The Russians thus driven from their posts, repassed the Boristhenes, which divides Poland from Muscovy. But this did not induce Charles to give over the pursuit; who followed them across that great river, which he passed at Mohilow, the last town of Poland, and which alternately belongs to the Poles and to the Russians; the usual fate of frontier towns.

The czar, seeing his empire, in which he had lately established the polite arts and a flourishing trade, thus exposed to a war, which, in a short time, might overturn all his mighty projects, and perhaps deprive him of his crown, began to think seriously of peace; and accordingly ventured to make some proposals to that purpose by a Polish gentleman, whom he sent to the Swedish army. Charles, who had not been accustomed to make peace with his enemies, except in their own capitals, replied, "I will treat with the czar at Moscow." When this haughty answer was reported to the czar, he said, "My brother Charles always affects to play the part of Alexander; but I flatter myself he will not find in me another Darius."

From Mohilow, where the king passed the Boristhenes, as you advance toward the north, about thirty leagues along the banks of that river, still on the frontiers of Poland and Muscovy, you enter the country of Smolensko, through which lies the great road that leads from Poland to Muscovy. This way the czar directed his flight, and the king pursued him by long marches; so that part of the Russian rear-guard was frequently engaged with the dragoons of the



van-guard of the Swedes. The latter had generally the advantage, but they were weakened even by victory in these small skirmishes, which were never decisive, and in which they constantly lost a number of men.

On the 22d of September, 1708, the king attacked a body of ten thousand horse, and six thousand Calmucks, near Smolensko.

The Calmucks are Tartars, living between the kingdom of Astracan, subject to the czar, and that of Samarcande, belonging to the Usbeck Tartars, and the country of Timur, known by the name of Tamerlane. The country of the Calmucks extends eastward to the mountains which divide the dominions of the Mogul from the western parts of Asia.

The inhabitants of that part of the country which borders upon Astracan, are tributary to the czar, who lays claim to an absolute authority over them; but their vagrant life hinders him from making it good, and obliges him to treat them in the same manner in which the grand seignor treats the Arabs; sometimes conniving at, and sometimes punishing their depredations. There are always some of these Calmucks in the Russian army; and the czar had even reduced them to a regular discipline, like the rest of his soldiers.

King Charles attacked these troops with only six regiments of horse and four thousand foot; broke the Muscovites at the first onset, at the head of his regiment of Ostrogothia, and obliged them to fly. He pursued them through rugged and hollow ways, where the Calmucks awhile concealing themselves, soon re-appeared, and cut off the regiment at the head of which the king fought from the rest of the Swedish army. The Russians and Calmucks jointly surrounded this regiment, and forced their way even to the king's person. Two aids-de-camp fighting near him fell at his feet. The king's horse was killed under him; and as one of his equerries was presenting him with another, both the equerry and horse were shot dead upon the spot. Charles then fought on foot, surrounded by his officers, who instantly flocked around him.

Many of them were taken, wounded, or slain, or pushed to a great distance from the king by the crowds that assailed them; so that he was soon left with no more than five attendants. With his own hand he had killed above twelve of the enemy, without receiving a single wound; owing to that surprising good fortune which had hitherto attended him, and upon which he constantly relied. At length, a colonel, named Dardof, broke his way through the Calmucks, and with a single company of his regiment arrived time enough to save the king. The rest of the Swedes put the Tartars to the sword. The army recovered its ranks; Charles mounted his horse, and fatigued as he was, pursued the Russians for two leagues.

The conqueror was still in the great road to the capital of Muscovy. But the distance from Smolensko, near which the battle was fought, to Moscow, is about a hundred French leagues; and the army began to be in want of provisions. Count Piper earnestly entreated the king to wait till General Lewenhaupt, who was bringing him supplies, together with a reinforcement of fifteen thousand men, should arrive. The king, who seldom, indeed, took council of any, not only rejected this wholesome advice, but, to the great astonishment of all the army, quitted the road to Moscow, and began to march southward towards the Ukraine, the country of the Cossacks, lying between Little Tartary, Poland, and Muscovy. This country extends about a hundred French leagues from north to south, and almost as many from east to west. It is divided into two parts nearly equal, by the Boristhenes, which runs from the north-west to the south-east. The chief town is Bathurin, situated upon the little river Sem. The most northern part of the Ukraine is rich, and well cultivated. The southernmost, lying in the forty-eighth degree of latitude, is one of the most fertile countries in the world, and yet one of the most desolate. Its wretched form of government stifles in embryo all the blessings which nature, if properly encouraged, would bring forth for the inhabitants. The people of these cantons, indeed, neither sow nor plant,

because the Tartars of Budziack, Precop, and Moldavia, being all of them free-booters and banditti, would rob them of their harvests.

The Ukraine hath always aspired after liberty; but being surrounded by Muscovy, the states of the grand seignor, and by Poland, it has been obliged to choose a protector, and consequently a master, in one of these three states. The inhabitants at first put themselves under the protection of the Poles, who treated them too much like vassals. They afterwards submitted to the Russians, who governed them with as despotic a sway.

They had originally the privilege of electing a prince under the name of general; but they were soon deprived of that right; and their general was nominated by the court of Moscow.

The person who then filled that station was a Polish gentleman, named Mazeppa, born in the palatinate of Podolia. He had been educated as page to John Casimir, and had received some tincture of polite learning in his court. An intrigue which he had in his youth with the lady of a Polish gentleman having been discovered, the husband caused him to be whipped with rods, to be bound stark naked upon a wild horse, and turned adrift in that condition. The horse, which had been brought out of the Ukraine, returned to his own country, and carried Mazeppa with him, half dead with hunger and fatigue. Some of the country people gave him assistance; and he lived among them for a long time, signalizing himself in several excursions against the Tartars. The superiority of his knowledge gained him great respect among the Cossacks; and his reputation greatly increasing, the czar found it necessary to make him prince of the Ukraine.

Being one day at table with the czar at Moscow, the emperor proposed to him the task of disciplining the Cossacks, and rendering them more docile and dependant. Mazeppa replied, that the situation of the Ukraine, and the genius of the nation, were insuperable obstacles to such a scheme.



The czar, who began to be overheated with wine, and had not, when sober, always the command of his passions, called him a traitor, and threatened to have him impaled.

Mazeppa, on his return to the Ukraine, formed the design of a revolt; the execution of which was greatly facilitated by the Swedish army, that soon after appeared on the frontiers. He resolved to render himself independent, and to erect the Ukraine, with some other ruins of the Russian empire, into a powerful kingdom. Brave, enterprising, and indefatigable, he entered secretly into a league with the king of Sweden, to accelerate the ruin of the czar, and to convert it to his own advantage.

The king appointed a rendezvous near the river Desna, where Mazeppa promised to meet him at the head of thirty thousand men, with ammunition and provisions, together with all his treasures, which were immense. The Swedish army, therefore, continued its march on that side, to the great regret of all the officers who knew nothing of the king's treaty with the Cossacks. In the mean time, Charles sent orders to Lewenhaupt to bring his troops and provisions, with all possible despatch, into the Ukraine, where he proposed to pass the winter, that having once secured that country, he might the more easily conquer Muscovy in the ensuing spring. He continued still to advance towards the river Desna, which falls into the Boristhenes at Kiow.

The obstructions the troops had hitherto encountered in their march, were but trifling in comparison of what they met with in this new route. They were obliged to cross a marshy forest, fifty leagues in length. General Lagercron, who led the way with five thousand soldiers and pioneers, misled the army thirty leagues too far to the east; nor did the king discover the mistake till after a tiresome march of four days. With difficulty they regained the right road; but almost all their artillery and wagons were lost, being either stuck fast, or entirely sunk in the morass.

After a march of twelve days, attended with many vexa-

tious and untoward circumstances, during which they had consumed the small quantity of biscuit that was left, the army, exhausted with hunger and fatigue, arrived on the banks of the Desna; the very spot which Mazeppa had marked out as a place of rendezvous; but instead of meeting with that prince, they found a body of Muscovites advancing towards the other side of the river. The king was astonished, but resolved immediately to pass the Desna, and attack the enemy. The banks of the river were so steep, that the soldiers were obliged to descend to the water with ropes. They crossed it in their usual manner, some on floats which were made in haste, and others by swimming. The body of Muscovites which arrived at the same time, did not exceed eight thousand men; so that it made but little resistance, and this obstacle was also surmounted.

Charles advanced farther into this desolate country, alike uncertain of his route and of Mazeppa's fidelity. That Cossack appeared at last, but rather like a fugitive than a powerful ally. The Muscovites had discovered and defeated his design; they had fallen upon the Cossacks and cut them in pieces. His principal friends being taken sword in hand, had, to the number of thirty, been broke on the wheel; his towns were reduced to ashes; his treasures plundered; the provisions he was preparing for the king of Sweden seized; and it was with great difficulty that he himself made his escape with six thousand men, and some horses laden with gold and silver. He gave the king, nevertheless, some hopes that he should be able to assist him by his intelligence in that unknown country, and by the affection of the Cossacks, who, being enraged against the Russians, flocked to the camp, and supplied the army with provisions.

Charles hoped, at least, that General Lewenhaupt would come and repair this misfortune. He was to bring with him about fifteen thousand Swedes, who were better than a hundred thousand Cossacks, together with ammunition and provisions. At length he arrived, in much the same condition with Mazeppa.

He had already passed the Boristhenes above Mihilow, and advanced twenty leagues beyond it, on the road to the Ukraine. He was bringing the king a convoy of eight thousand wagons, with the money which he had levied in his march through Lithuania. He no sooner approached the town of Lesno, near the conflux of the rivers Pronia and Sossa, which fall into the Boristhenes at a great distance beneath it, than the czar appeared at the head of near forty thousand men.

The Swedish general, who had not sixteen thousand complete, disdained, however, the defence of intrenchments. A long train of victories had inspired the Swedes with so much confidence, that they never informed themselves of the number of their enemies, but only of the place where they were. Accordingly, on the seventh of October, 1708, in the afternoon, Lewenhaupt without hesitation advanced against him. In the first attack, the Swedes killed fifteen hundred Russians. The czar's army was thrown into confusion, and fled on all sides. The emperor of Russia saw himself upon the point of being entirely defeated. He was sensible that the safety of his dominions depended upon the success of this day, and that he must be utterly ruined, should Lewenhaupt join the king of Sweden with a victorious army.

The moment he saw his troops begin to give way, he flew to the rear guard, where the Cossacks and Calmucks were posted. "I charge you," said he, "to fire upon every one that runs away, even on me myself, should I be so cowardly as to fly." Returning then to the van, he rallied his troops himself, assisted by the Princes Menzikoff and Gallitzin. Lewenhaupt, who had received strict orders to rejoin his master, chose rather to continue his march than renew the battle, imagining he had done enough to prevent the enemy from pursuing him.

Next morning, about eleven o'clock, the czar attacked him upon the border of the morass, and extended his lines with a view to surround him. The Swedes faced about on all sides, and the battle was maintained with equal obstinacy.



The loss of the Muscovites was three times greater than that of the Swedes; the former still kept their ground, and the victory was left undecided.

At four in the afternoon, General Baver brought the czar a reinforcement of troops. The battle was then renewed for the third time, with more eagerness than ever, and lasted till night, when, at length, superior numbers prevailed; the Swedes were broke, routed, and driven back to their baggage. Lewenhaupt rallied his troops behind the wagons. The Swedes were conquered, but disdained to fly. They were still about nine thousand in number, and not so much as one of them deserted. The general drew them up in order of battle, with as much ease as if they had not been defeated. The czar, on the other side, remained all night under arms, and forbade his officers under pain of being cashiered, and his soldiers under pain of death, to leave their ranks in order to plunder.

Next morning at day-break, he ordered a fresh assault. Meantime, Lewenhaupt had retired to an advantageous situation at the distance of a few miles, after having nailed up part of his cannon, and set fire to his baggage-wagons.

The Muscovites arrived time enough to prevent the whole convoy from being consumed by the flames. They seized about six thousand carriages, which they saved. The czar, desirous of completing the defeat of the Swedes, sent one of his general, named Phlug, to attack them again for the fifth time. That general offered them an honourable capitulation. Lewenhaupt refused it, and fought a fifth battle, as bloody as any of the former. Of the nine thousand soldiers he had left, he lost about one half, the other remained unbroken. At length, night coming on, the Swedish general, after having sustained five battles against forty thousand men, passed the Sossa, with about five thousand soldiers that remained. The czar lost about ten thousand men in these five engagements, in which he had the glory of conquering the Swedes; and Lewenhaupt that of disputing the victory for three days, and of effecting a retreat without having been forced in his last

post. Thus he arrived at his master's camp with the honour of having so bravely defended himself, but bringing with him neither ammunition nor army.

The king of Sweden thus found himself destitute of provisions, cut off from all communication with Poland, and surrounded with enemies, in the heart of a country where he had no other resource than his own courage.

In this extremity, the memorable winter of 1709, which was still more severe in that part of Europe than in France, destroyed numbers of his troops; for Charles resolved to brave the seasons, as he had done his enemies, and ventured to make long marches during this mortal cold. It was in one of these marches that two thousand men fell down dead with cold almost before his eyes. The dragoons had no boots, and the infantry were without shoes, and almost without clothes. They were forced to make stockings of the skins of wild beasts, in the best manner they could, and they were frequently in want of bread. They had been obliged to throw almost all their cannon into the marshes and rivers, for want of horses to draw them; so that this once flourishing army was reduced to twenty-four thousand men, ready to perish with hunger. They no longer received any advices from Sweden, nor were able to send any thither. In this condition, only one officer complained. "What," said the king to him, "are you uneasy at being so far from your wife? If you are a true soldier, I will lead you to such a distance, that you shall hardly be able to hear from Sweden once in three years."

The Marquis de B\*\*\*, afterwards ambassador in Sweden, told me, that a soldier ventured, in presence of the whole army, to present to the king, with an air of complaint, a piece of bread that was black and mouldy, made of barley and oats, which was the only food they then had, and of which they had not even a sufficiency. The king received the piece of bread without the least emotion, eat every morsel of it, and then coolly said to the soldier, "It is not good, but it may be eaten." This incident, trifling as it is, if in-

deed any thing that increases respect and confidence can be called trifling, contributed more than all the rest to make the Swedish army support those hardships, which would have been intolerable under any other general.

In this situation, he at last received news from Stockholm; but they brought only advice of the death of his sister, the duchess of Holstein, who was carried off by the small-pox, in the month of December, 1708, in the twenty-seventh year of her age. She was a princess as mild and gentle as her brother was imperious in his disposition and implacable in his revenge. He had always entertained a great affection for her; and was the more afflicted with her death, as now beginning to taste of misfortunes himself, he was of course become a little more susceptible.

He was also informed, that money and troops had been raised in Sweden, agreeably to his orders; but nothing could reach his camp, as between him and Stockholm there were near five hundred leagues to march, and an enemy superior in number to engage.

The czar, who was as active as the king, after having sent fresh troops to the assistance of the confederates of Poland, who, under the command of General Siniauski, exerted their joint efforts against Stanislaus, immediately advanced into the Ukraine, in the midst of this severe winter, to make head against the king of Sweden. He continued to pursue the political scheme he had formed, of weakening his enemies by petty rencounters, wisely judging that the Swedish army must in the end be entirely ruined, as it could not possibly be recruited. The cold must certainly have been very severe, as it obliged the two monarchs to agree to a suspension of arms. But on the first of February they renewed their military operations, in the midst of frost and snow.

After several slight skirmishes and some losses, the king perceived, in the month of April, that he had only eighteen thousand Swedes remaining. Mazeppa alone, the prince of the Cossacks, supplied them with provisions, without which



assistance the army must have perished with cold and hunger. At this conjuncture, the czar made proposals to Mazepa, to return again under his authority. But whether it was that the terrible punishment of the wheel, by which his friends had perished, made the Cossack apprehend the same danger for himself, or that he was desirous of revenging their deaths, he continued faithful to his new ally.

Charles, with his eighteen thousand Swedes, had neither lost the design nor the hope of penetrating to Moscow. He, therefore, toward the end of May, laid siege to Pultowa, upon the river Vorska, at the eastern extremity of the Ukraine, and more than thirteen leagues from the Boristhenes. This country is inhabited by the Zaporavians, the most extraordinary people on the earth. They are a collection of ancient Russians, Poles, and Tartars, professing a species of Christianity, and exercising a kind of free-booting, resembling that of the buccaneers. They elect a chief, whom they frequently depose or strangle. They suffer no woman to live among them, but carry off all the children for twenty or thirty leagues around, and bring them up to their own manners. In the summer, they always live in the open fields; in the winter they shelter themselves in large barns, which contain four or five hundred men. They fear nothing, live free, and brave death for the smallest booty, with the same intrepidity as Charles XII. did, in order to obtain the power of bestowing crowns. The czar gave them sixty thousand florins, in the hope to engage them in his interest. They took his money, but, through the intrigues of Mazepa, immediately declared in favour of Charles; though their service was of very little consequence, as they esteem it a folly to fight for any thing but plunder. It was no small advantage, however, that they were prevented from doing harm. The number of their troops was at most but about two thousand. Ten of their chiefs were presented one morning to the king; but they had great difficulty to prevail on them to remain sober, as they commonly begin the day by getting drunk. They were brought to the intrenchments,

where they showed their dexterity in firing with long carbines; for being placed upon the mounds, they killed, at the distance of six hundred paces, such of the enemy as were pointed out. To these banditti, Charles added several thousand Wallachians, whom he had hired from the cham of Little Tartary. He then laid siege to Pultowa with all these troops of Zaporavians, Cossacks, and Wallachians; which, joined to his eighteen thousand Swedes, made up an army of about thirty thousand men, but an army in a wretched condition, and in want of every thing. The czar had formed a magazine in Pultowa, which, if the king had taken, he would have opened himself a way to Moscow; and have been able at least, amidst the great abundance he would then have possessed, to wait the arrival of the succours which he still expected from Sweden, Livonia, Pomerania, and Poland. His only resource, therefore, being in the conquest of Pultowa, he pressed the siege of it with great ardour. Mazeppa, who carried on a correspondence in that town, assured him that he would soon be master of it. This hope re-animated the whole army; for the soldiers considered the taking of Pultowa as the end of all their miseries.

The king perceived, from the beginning of the siege, that he had taught his enemies the art of war; for, in spite of all his precautions, Prince Menzikoff threw succours into the town, by which means the garrison was strong to the number of almost five thousand men.

They made several sallies, and sometimes with success: they likewise sprung mines; but what rendered the town impregnable was the approach of the czar, who advanced with seventy thousand men. Charles went to reconnoitre them on the twenty-seventh of May, the day of his birth, and beat one of their detachments; but as he was returning to his camp, he received a shot from a carbine, which pierced his boot, and shattered the bone of his heel. There was not the least alteration observable in his countenance, from which it could be suspected that he was wounded; he continued to give orders with great composure, and after this ac-

cident remained near six hours on horseback. One of his domestics observing that the sole of the king's boot was covered with blood, ran to call the surgeons; and the pain was now become so exquisite, that they were obliged to assist him in dismounting, and to carry him into his tent. The surgeons examined the wound, and were of opinion that the leg must be cut off. The consternation of the army on this occasion was inexpressible, till one of the surgeons, named Newman, who had more skill and courage than the rest, affirmed, that by making deep incisions he could save the king's leg. "Fall to work then presently," said the king to him, "cut boldly, and fear nothing." He himself held his leg with both his hands, and beheld the incisions that were made in it as if the operation had been performed upon another person.

While they were laying on the dressings, he ordered an assault to be made the next day; but he had hardly given this order, before he was informed that the whole army of the enemy was advancing against him. It became then necessary to alter his measures. Charles, wounded and incapable of acting, saw himself situated between the Boristhenes and the river that runs to Pultowa, in a desert country, without any places of security, without ammunition, and in the face of an army which at once cut off his retreat, and prevented his being supplied with provisions. In this extremity he did not assemble a council of war, as has been published in some other accounts, but on the night between the seventh and eighth of July, he sent for Velt Mareschal Renschild into his tent, and without deliberation, or the least discomposure, ordered him to make the necessary dispositions for attacking the czar next day. Renschild made no objections, and went to carry his orders into execution. At the door of the king's tent he met Count Piper, with whom he had had a misunderstanding for some time, which frequently happens between the minister and the general. Piper asked him if he had any news. "No," said the general coldly, and passed on to give his orders. As soon as Count Piper had entered the tent, "Has Renschild told



you nothing?" said the king. "Nothing," answered Piper. "Well, then, I will tell you," replied the king; "to-morrow we shall give battle." Count Piper was terrified at so desperate a resolution; but as he well knew it was impossible to make his master change his mind, he expressed his surprise only by his silence, and left Charles to sleep till break of day.

It was on the 8th of July, 1709, that the decisive battle of Pultowa was fought between the two most extraordinary monarchs that were then in the world: Charles XII., illustrious from nine years of victories; Peter Alexiowitz from nine years of labours, taken to form troops equal to those of Sweden: the one glorious for having given away dominions; the other for having civilized his own: Charles fond of dangers, and fighting for glory alone; Alexiowitz not avoiding dangers, and making war only for advantage: the Swedish monarch liberal from greatness of soul; the Muscovite never giving but with some design: the one, master of a continence and sobriety beyond example, of a magnanimous disposition, and never cruel but once; the other, not having yet divested himself from the barbarism of his education and of his country, as much the object of terror to his subjects as of admiration to strangers, and too prone to excesses, which even shortened his days. Charles bore the title of "invincible," of which a single moment might deprive him; the neighbouring nations had given Peter Alexiowitz the name of "great," which, as he did not owe it to his victories, he could not lose by a defeat.

To have a distinct idea of this battle, and the place where it was fought, we must figure to ourselves Pultowa on the north, the camp of the king of Sweden on the south, stretching a little toward the east, his baggage about a mile behind him, and the river of Pultowa on the north of the town, running from east to west.

The czar had passed the river about a league from Pultowa, toward the west, and was beginning to form his camp.

At break of day the Swedes appeared before the trenches

with four iron cannon, which was the whole of their artillery; the rest were left in the camp, with about three thousand men, and four thousand remained with the baggage; so that the Swedish army which advanced against the enemy, consisted of about one-and-twenty thousand men, of which there were about sixteen thousand Swedes.

The Generals Renschild, Roos, Lewenhaupt, Schlippenback, Hoorn, Sparre, Hamilton, the prince of Wirtemberg, the king's relation, and some others, the greatest part of whom had seen the battle of Narva, put the subaltern officers in mind of that day, wherein eight thousand Swedes defeated an army of eighty thousand Muscovites in their intrenchments. The officers exhorted the soldiers by the same motive, every one encouraging each other in their march.

The king, carried in a litter at the head of his infantry, conducted the march. A party of the cavalry advanced by his order to attack that of the enemy; and the battle began with this engagement at half an hour past four in the morning. The enemy's cavalry was posted toward the west, on the right side of the Russian camp. Prince Menzikoff and Count Gallowin had placed them at certain distances between redoubts lined with cannon. General Schlippenback, at the head of the Swedes, rushed upon this body of cavalry. All those who have served in the Swedish troops, know that it is almost impossible to withstand the fury of their first attack. The Muscovite squadrons were broken and routed. The czar, who ran up to rally them in person, had his hat pierced with a musket ball; Menzikoff had three horses killed under him; the Swedes cried out "victory!"

Charles did not doubt but that the battle was gained; he had sent in the middle of the night General Creuts, with five thousand horse or dragoons, who were to take the enemy in flank, while he attacked them in front; but as his ill fortune would have it, Creuts mistook his way, and did not appear. The czar, who thought he was ruined, had time to rally his cavalry. He now in his turn, fell upon that of the king, which, not being supported by the detachment of

Creuts, was broken in its turn. Schlipenback was taken prisoner in this engagement. At the same time, seventy-two pieces of cannon played from the camp upon the Swedish cavalry; and the Russian infantry, opening their lines, advanced to attack that of Charles.

The czar now detached Prince Menzikoff to go and post himself between Pultowa and the Swedes. Prince Menzikoff executed his master's orders with dexterity and expedition; and not only cut off the communication between the Swedish army and the camp before Pultowa, but, having met with a corps de reserve, of three thousand men, he surrounded them, and cut them to pieces. If Menzikoff performed this exploit of his own accord, Russia owes its preservation to him: if it was by the order of the czar, he was an adversary worthy of Charles XII. Meanwhile, the Russian infantry came out of their lines, and advanced into the plain in order of battle. On the other hand, the Swedish cavalry rallied within a quarter of a league from the enemy; and the king, assisted by Velt-Mareschal Renschild, made the necessary disposition for a general engagement.

He ranged the remainder of his troops in two lines, his infantry occupying the centre, and his cavalry the two wings. The czar disposed his army in the same manner; he, however, had the advantage of numbers, and of seventy-two pieces of cannon, while the Swedes had no more than four to oppose him, and began to be in want of powder.

The emperor of Muscovy was in the centre of his army, having then only the title of major general, and seemed to obey General Zeremetoff. But he rode from rank to rank in the character of emperor, mounted on a Turkish horse which was a present from the grand seignor, animating the captains and soldiers, and promising rewards to them all.

At nine in the morning the battle was renewed. One of the first discharges of the Russian cannon carried off the two horses of Charles's litter. He caused two others to be put to it. A second discharge broke the litter in pieces, and overturned the king. Of four-and-twenty drabants, who re-



lieved each other in carrying him, one-and-twenty were killed. The Swedes, struck with consternation, began to stagger; and the cannon of the enemy continuing to mow them down, the first line fell back upon the second, and the second began to fly. In this last action, it was only one line of ten thousand Russian infantry that routed the whole Swedish army; so much were matters changed!

All the Swedish writers affirm, that they would have gained the battle, if they had not committed several blunders; but all the officers pretend, that it was a great error to give battle at all, and a greater still to shut themselves up in a desert country, against the advice of the most prudent generals, in opposition to a warlike enemy, three times stronger than Charles, both in the number of men and the many resources from which the Swedes were entirely cut off. The remembrance of Narva was the principal cause of Charles's misfortune at Pultowa.

The prince of Wirtemberg, General Renschild, and several principal officers, were already made prisoners; the camp before Pultowa was stormed; and all was thrown into a confusion, against which they had no remedy. Count Piper, with some officers of the chancery, had left the camp, and neither knew what to do, nor what was become of the king, but ran about from one corner of the field of battle to the other. A major named Bere, offered to conduct them to the baggage; but the clouds of dust and smoke which covered the country, and the confusion of mind so natural amidst such consternation, brought them directly to the counter-scarp of the town, where they were all made prisoners by the garrison.

The king refused to fly, and was unable to defend himself. It was at this instant that General Poniatowsky happened to be near him, colonel of Stanislaus's Polish guards, a man of extraordinary merit, who had been induced, from his attachment to the person of Charles, to follow him into the Ukraine, without possessing any command. He was a man who, in all the occurrences of life, and amidst those dangers

in which others would at most have displayed their courage, always took his resolution with despatch, prudence and success. He made a sign to two drabants, who took the king under the arms, and placed him on horseback, notwithstanding the extreme pain of his wounds.

Poniatowsky, though he had no command in the army, became on this occasion a general through necessity, and rallied five hundred horse near the king's person; some of them drabants, others officers, and a few private troopers. This body being assembled, and animated by the misfortune of their prince, made their way through more than ten Russian regiments, and conducted Charles through the midst of the enemy for the space of a league, to the baggage of the Swedish army.

Charles, being pursued in his flight, had his horse killed under him; Colonel Gieta, though wounded and spent with loss of blood, gave him his. Thus, in the course of the flight, they twice put this conqueror on horseback, who had not been able to mount a horse during the engagement.

This surprising retreat was of great consequence in such distressful circumstances; but he was obliged to fly still further. They found Count Piper's coach among the baggage, for the king had never used one since he left Stockholm; they put him into this vehicle, and took their route toward the Boristhenes with great precipitation. The king, who from the time they put him on horseback till his arrival at the baggage, had not spoke a single word, at length inquired what was become of Count Piper. They told him he was taken prisoner, with all the officers of the chancery. "And General Renschild and the duke of Wirtemberg?" added the king. "They are also prisoners," said Poniatowsky. "Prisoners to the Russians!" returned Charles, shrugging up his shoulders: "Come, then, let us rather go to the Turks." They could not perceive, however, the least mark of dejection in his countenance; and whoever had seen him at that time, without knowing his situation, would never have suspected that he was conquered and wounded.

While he was getting off, the Russians seized his artillery in the camp before Pultowa, his baggage, and his military chests, in which they found six millions in specie, the spoils of the Poles and Saxons. About nine thousand men, Swedes and Cossacks, were killed in the battle, and about six thousand taken prisoners. There still remained about sixteen thousand men, including the Swedes, Poles, and Cossacks, who fled toward the Boristhenes, under the conduct of General Lewenhaupt. He marched one way with these fugitive troops, and the king took another road with some of his horse. The coach in which he rode broke down in their march, and they again set him on horseback. To complete his misfortune, he wandered all night in a wood ; where, his courage being no longer able to support his exhausted spirits, the pain of his wound becoming more intolerable through fatigue, and his horse falling under him through weariness, he lay several hours at the foot of a tree, in danger of being surprised every moment by the conquerors, who were searching for him on all sides.

At last, in the night of the ninth or tenth of July, he found himself opposite to the Boristhenes. Lewenhaupt had just arrived with the remains of his army. The Swedes beheld with a mixture of joy and grief, their king, whom they had believed dead. The enemy was approaching, and the Swedes had neither a bridge to pass the river, time to make one, powder to defend themselves, nor provision to support an army, which had eat nothing for two days. At the same time, the remains of this army were Swedes, and the conquered king was Charles XII. Almost all the officers imagined that they were to wait there with firmness for the Russians, and that they should either conquer or die on the banks of the Boristhenes. There was no doubt but Charles would have taken this resolution, had he not been exhausted with weakness. His wound was now come to suppuration, attended with a fever ; and it hath been remarked, that men of the greatest intrepidity, when seized with a fever, which is common in suppuration, lose that instinct of valour,



which, like other virtues, requires the direction of a clear head. Charles was now no longer himself. It is what I have been assured of, and what is most probably the truth. They carried him along like a sick person in a state of insensibility. There was yet, by good luck, a sorry calash, which they accidentally had brought thither with them. This they put on board a little boat; and the king and General Mazeppa embarked in another. The latter had saved several coffers full of money; but the current being too rapid, and a violent wind beginning to rise, the Cossack threw more than three-fourths of his treasures into the river to lighten the boat. Mullern, the king's chancellor, and Count Poniatowsky, a man more necessary to the king than ever, by the resources which his ingenuity furnished in every difficulty, crossed over in other barks, with some officers. Three hundred of the Swedish cavalry, and a great number of Poles and Cossacks, trusting to the goodness of their horses, ventured to pass the river by swimming. Their troop, keeping close together, resisted the current and broke the waves; but all those who attempted to pass a little below were carried down by the stream, and perished in the river. Of the infantry who risked the passage, not one arrived on the opposite shore.

While the shattered remains of the army were in this extremity, Prince Menzikoff approached with ten thousand horsemen, having each a foot soldier behind him. The carcasses of Swedes who had died by the way, of their wounds, fatigue, and hunger, sufficiently apprized him of the road which the fugitive army had taken. The prince sent a trumpet to the Swedish general, to offer him a capitulation. Four general officers were immediately despatched by Lewenhaupt to receive the commands of the conqueror. Before that day, sixteen thousand soldiers of King Charles would have attacked the whole forces of the Russian empire, and would have perished to a man rather than surrender. But after the loss of a battle, and flight of two days, deprived of the presence of their prince, who was himself constrained

to fly, the strength of every soldier being exhausted, and their courage no longer supported by hope, the love of life overcame their natural intrepidity. Colonel Trouteffet alone, since governor of Stralsund, observing the Muscovites approach, advanced with one Swedish battalion to attack them, hoping, by this means, to induce the rest of the troops to follow his example. But Lewenhaupt was obliged to oppose this unavailing ardour. The capitulation was settled, and the whole army were made prisoners of war. Some soldiers, in despair at the thoughts of falling into the hands of the Muscovites, precipitated themselves into the Boristhenes. Two officers of the regiment of the brave Trouteffet, killed each other, and the rest were made slaves. They all filed off in the presence of Prince Menzikoff, laying their arms at his feet, as thirty thousand Muscovites had done nine years before at those of the king of Sweden at Narva; with this difference, that the king dismissed all those Muscovite prisoners, whom he did not fear, and the czar retained the Swedes who were taken at Pultowa.

These unhappy creatures were afterwards dispersed through the czar's dominions, particularly in Siberia, a vast province of Great Tartary, which extends eastward to the frontiers of the Chinese empire. In this barbarous country, where even the use of bread was unknown, the Swedes, become ingenious through necessity, exercised the trades and employments of which they had the least notion. All the distinctions which fortune makes among men were there banished. The officer who could not follow any trade was obliged to cleave and carry wood for the soldier, now turned tailor, clothier, joiner, mason, or goldsmith, and who earned his subsistence. Some of the officers became painters, and others architects; some of them even taught the languages and mathematics. They even established some public schools, which in time became so useful and famous, that children were sent thither from Moscow.

Count Piper, the king of Sweden's first minister, was a long time confined in prison at Petersburg. The czar was

persuaded, as well as the rest of Europe, that this minister had sold his master to the duke of Marlborough, and drawn on Muscovy the arms of Sweden, which might have given peace to Europe. He, therefore, rendered his confinement the more severe. The minister died a few years after in Muscovy, little assisted by his own family, who lived in opulence at Stockholm, and vainly lamented by his king, who would never condescend to offer a ransom for his minister, which he feared the czar would not accept of, as no cartel of exchange had ever been settled between Charles and the czar.

The emperor of Muscovy, elated with a joy which he took no pains to conceal, received upon the field of battle the prisoners, whom they brought to him in crowds; and asked every moment, "Where, then, is my brother Charles!"

He did the Swedish generals the honour of inviting them to his table. Among other questions which he put to them, he asked General Renschild, "what might be the number of his master's troops before the battle?" Renschild answered, "that the king alone had the muster-roll, and would never communicate it to any one; but that for his own part, he imagined the whole might be about thirty thousand, of which eighteen thousand were Swedes, and the rest Cossacks." The czar seemed to be surprised, and asked, "how they durst venture to penetrate into so distant a country, and lay siege to Pultowa, with such a handful of men?" "We are not always consulted," replied the Swedish general, "but, like faithful servants, we obey our master's orders, without ever presuming to contradict them." The czar, at this answer, turned about to some of his courtiers, who were formerly suspected of having engaged in a conspiracy against him: "Ah! (says he) see how a king ought to be served;" and then taking a glass of wine, "To the health," says he, "of my masters in the art of war." Renschild asked him who were the persons whom he honoured with so high a



title. "You, gentlemen, the Swedish generals," replied the czar. "Your majesty is very ungrateful, then," replied the count, "to treat your masters with so much severity." After dinner, the czar caused their swords to be restored to all the general officers, and behaved to them like a prince who wished to give his subjects a lesson of generosity and politeness, with which he was well acquainted. But this very prince, who treated the Swedish generals with so much humanity, caused all the Cossacks that fell into his hands to be broke upon the wheel.

Thus the Swedish army, which left Saxony so triumphantly, was now no more. One half of them had perished with hunger, and the other half were either massacred or made slaves. Charles XII. had lost in one day the fruit of nine years labour, and of almost a hundred battles. He was flying in a wretched calash, having by his side Major-General Hord, who was dangerously wounded. The rest of his party followed, some on foot, some on horseback, and others in wagons, through a desert, where they neither saw huts, tents, men, beasts, nor roads; every thing was wanting, even water itself. It was now the beginning of July; the country lay in the forty-seventh degree of latitude; the dry sand of the desert rendered the heat of the sun the more insupportable; the horses dropped down by the way; and the men were ready to die with thirst. A brook of muddy water, which they found towards evening, was their only resource; they filled some bladders with this water, which saved the lives of the king's little troop. After a march of five days, he at last found himself on the banks of the river Hypanis, now called Bogh by the barbarians who have disfigured the very names of those countries which once flourished so nobly in the possession of the Greek colonies. This river joins the Boristhenes some miles lower, and falls along with it into the Black Sea.

On the other side of the Bogh, toward the south, stands the little town of Oczakou, a frontier of the Turkish empire.

The inhabitants seeing a troop of soldiers approach, to whose dress and language they were strangers, refused to carry them over the river without an order from Mehemet Pacha, governor of Oczakou. The king sent an express to the governor to demand a passage. This Turk, not knowing what to do in a country where one false step frequently costs a man his life, did not dare to take any thing upon himself without having first obtained the permission of the seraskier of the province, who resides at Bender, in Bessarabia. While they were waiting for this permission, the Russians, who had made the king's army prisoner, had crossed the Boristhenes, and were approaching to take him also. At last the pacha of Oczakou sent word to the king, that he would furnish him with one small boat to transport himself and two or three of his attendants. In this extremity, the Swedes took by force what they could not obtain by gentle means : some of them went over to the other side in a small skiff, seized on some boats, and brought them to the hither bank of the river. This proved their safe-guard ; for the masters of the Turkish barks, fearing they should lose such a favourable opportunity of getting a good freight, came in crowds to offer their service. At the same time, precisely, arrived a favourable answer from the seraskier of Bender : but the Muscovites appeared, and the king had the mortification to see five hundred of his men seized by the enemy, whose insulting bravadoes he even heard. The pacha of Oczakou, by means of an interpreter, asked his pardon for the delays which had occasioned the loss of these five hundred men, and humbly intreated him not to complain of it to the grand seignor. Charles promised, though not without giving him as severe a reprimand as if he had been speaking to one of his own subjects.

The commander of Bender, who was likewise seraskier, a title which answers to that of general, and pacha of the province, which signifies governor and intendant, immediately sent an aga to compliment the king, and to offer him a

magnificent tent, with provision, baggage wagons, and all the conveniences, officers, and attendants, necessary to conduct him to Bender in a splendid manner; for it is the custom of the Turks not only to defray the charges of ambassadors to the place of their residence, but likewise to supply, with great liberality, the necessities of those princes who take refuge among them, during the time of their stay.



## BOOK V.

ARGUMENT.—State of the Ottoman Porte.—Charles takes up his abode near Bender.—His employments.—His intrigues at the Porte.—His designs.—Augustus regains his throne.—The king of Denmark makes a descent upon Sweden.—All the other dominions of Charles are attacked.—The czar enters Moscow in triumph.—The affair of Pruth.—History of the czarina, who from a peasant becomes an empress.

ACHMET III. at that time governed the Turkish empire. He had been placed upon the throne in 1703, in the room of his brother Mustapha, by a revolution like to that which transferred the crown of England from James II. to his son-in-law William. Mustapha, by submitting in every thing to his mufti, whom the Turks abhorred, provoked the whole empire to rise against him. His army, by the assistance of which he hoped to punish the malcontents, joined his enemies. He was seized and deposed in form, and his brother taken from the seraglio in order to be created sultan, almost without spilling a single drop of blood. Achmet shut up the deposed sultan in the seraglio at Constantinople, where he lived for several years, to the great astonishment of Turkey, which had been accustomed to see the death of her princes immediately follow their dethronement.

The new sultan, as the only recompense for a crown which he owed to the ministers, to the generals, to the officers of the Janizaries, and in a word, to those who had had any hand in the revolution, put them all to death one after another, for fear they should one day attempt a second revolution. By the sacrifice of so many brave men, he weakened the strength of the nation, but at the same time established his throne, at least for some years. He next applied himself to amass riches, and was the first of the Ottoman race who ventured to make a small alteration in the current coin, and to impose new taxes; but he has been obliged to stop short in both these enterprises for fear of an insurrection. The rapacity and tyranny of the grand seignor

are seldom extended farther than the officers of the empire, who, whatever they may be in other respects, are domestic slaves to the sultan; while the rest of the mussulmen live in profound tranquillity, without fearing for their lives, their fortune, or their liberty.

Such was the Turkish emperor in whose territories the king of Sweden sought an asylum. As soon as he set foot in the sultan's dominions, he wrote him a letter, which bears date the 13th of July, 1709. Several copies of this letter were spread abroad, all of which are now held spurious; but of all those I have seen, there is not one which does not mark the haughtiness of the author, and is not more conformable to his courage than his situation. The sultan did not return an answer till toward the end of September. The pride of the Ottoman Porte made Charles sensible of the distinction it placed between a Turkish emperor and a king of part of Scandinavia, a conquered and fugitive Christian. For the rest, all these letters, which are seldom written by sovereigns themselves, are but vain formalities, which neither discover the character of the princes, nor the state of their affairs.

Charles XII. was in effect in no other situation in Turkey, than that of a captive, honourably treated; yet he conceived the design of arming the Ottoman empire against his enemies, and flattered himself that he should reduce Poland under the yoke, and subdue Russia. He had an envoy at Constantinople; but the person that served him most effectually in his vast projects, was the Count de Poniatowsky, who went to Constantinople without any commission, and soon rendered himself necessary to the king, agreeable to the Porte, and, at last, dangerous to the grand viziers themselves.\*

One of those who seconded his designs with the greatest address, was the physician Fonseca, a Portuguese Jew, settled at Constantinople, a man of knowledge and of the world,

\* It was from this nobleman I received not only the remarks which had been published, and of which the chaplain Norberg hath made use, but likewise several other manuscripts relating to this history.

well qualified for the management of business, and perhaps the only philosopher of his nation: his profession procured him a free access to the Ottoman Porte, and frequently gained him the confidence of the viziers. With this gentleman I was very well acquainted at Paris, who confirmed to me all the particulars I am going to relate. Count Poniatowsky has informed me, both by letters and in conversation, that he had had the address to convey some letters to the Sultana Valide, the mother of the reigning emperor, who had formerly been ill used by her son, but now began to acquire credit in the seraglio. A Jewess, who was often admitted to this princess, never ceased to recount to her the exploits of the king of Sweden, and charmed her ear by these relations. The Sultanness, moved by that secret inclination with which most women feel themselves inspired, in favour of extraordinary men, even without having seen them, openly espoused this prince's cause in the seraglio, whom she called by no other name than that of her lion. "When will you," would she sometimes say to the sultan, her son, "assist my lion to devour this czar?" She even so far dispensed with the austere rules of the seraglio, as to write several letters with her own hand to Count Poniatowsky, in whose custody they still are at the time of my writing this history.

Meanwhile, they conducted the king with all honour to Bender, through the desert that was formerly called the wilderness of the Gataë. The Turks took care that nothing should be wanting on the way to render his journey agreeable. A great many Poles, Swedes, and Cossacks, who had escaped from the Muscovites, came by different roads, to increase his train on their march. By the time he reached Bender, he had eighteen hundred men, who were all maintained and lodged, they and their horses, at the expense of the grand seignor.

The king chose to encamp near Bender, rather than lodge in the town. The seraskier, Jussuff Pacha, caused a magnificent tent to be erected for him; and tents were likewise provided for all the lords of his retinue. Some time after,



Charles built a house in this place ; the officers followed his example, and the soldiers raised barracks ; so that this camp insensibly became a little town. The king not being yet cured of his wounds, was obliged to have a carious bone extracted from his foot ; but as he could mount a horse, he resumed his usual labours, always rising before the sun, tiring three horses a day, and exercising his soldiers. His sole amusement was sometimes playing at chess ; and as the characters of men are often discovered by the most trifling incidents, it may not be improper to observe, that he always moved the king in his game, and even made more use of him than of the other pieces ; by which he lost every party.

At Bender, Charles found himself amidst an abundance of every thing, very uncommon to a conquered and fugitive prince ; for besides the more than sufficient quantity of provisions, and the five hundred crowns a day, which he received from the Ottoman munificence, he still drew money from France, and borrowed of the merchants at Constantinople. A part of this money served to forward his intrigues in the seraglio, in buying the favours of the viziers, or procuring their ruin. The rest he distributed with great profusion among his officers, and the Janissaries who composed his guards at Bender. Grothusen, his favourite and treasurer, was the dispenser of his liberality ; a man who, contrary to the custom of persons in that station, was as fond of giving as his master. He carried him one day, an account of sixty thousand crowns in two lines ; ten thousand crowns given to the Swedes and Janissaries, by the generous orders of his majesty, and the rest spent by myself : "It is thus I would have my friends give in their accounts," said the king : "Mullern makes me read whole pages for the sum of ten thousand livres. I like the laconic stile of Grothusen much better." One of his old officers, who was suspected of being somewhat covetous, complained to him that his majesty gave all to Grothusen. "I give money," replies the king, "to none but those who know how to use it." This generosity frequently reduced him so low, that he had not wherewith to give. More eco-

mony in his liberality would have been as honourable, and more for his interest: but it was the failing of this prince, to carry every virtue to excess.

Great numbers of strangers went from Constantinople to see him. The Turks and the neighbouring Tartars came thither in crowds; all respected and admired him. His inflexible resolution to abstain from wine, and his regularity in assisting twice a day at public prayers, made them say, "this is a true Mussulman:" and they burned with impatience to march along with him to the conquest of Muscovy.

During his stay at Bender, which was much longer than he expected, he insensibly acquired a taste for reading. Baron Fabricius, a gentleman of the duke of Holstein, a young man of an amiable character, who possessed that gayety of temper, and easy turn of wit, which is so agreeable to princes, was the person who engaged him in these literary amusements. He had been sent to reside with him at Bender to take care of the interests of the young duke of Holstein; and he succeeded therein by rendering himself agreeable. He had read all the best French authors. He persuaded the king to read the tragedies of Peter Corneille, those of Racine, and the works of Despreaux. The king had no relish for the satires of the last author, which indeed are far from being his best pieces, but he was very fond of his other writings. When he read that passage of the eighth satire, where the author treats Alexander as a fool and a madman, he tore the leaf.

Of all the French tragedies, Mithridates was the one which pleased him most, because the situation of that monarch, vanquished and still breathing revenge, was conformable to his own. He showed M. Fabricius the passages that struck him, pointing them out with his finger; but would never read any of them aloud, nor ever hazard a single word in French. Nay, when he afterwards saw M. des Alleurs, the French ambassador at the Porte, a man of distinguished merit, but acquainted only with his mother tongue, he answered him in Latin; of which when M. des Alleurs pro-

tested he did not understand four words, the king, rather than talk French, sent for an interpreter.

This was the employment of Charles XII. at Bender, where he waited till a Turkish army should come to his assistance. His envoy presented memorials in his name to the grand vizier, and Poniatowsky supported them with all his interest. The talent of insinuation never fails of success. He was always dressed in the Turkish fashion, and had free access to every place. The grand seignor presented him with a purse of a thousand ducats, and the grand vizier said to him, "I will take your king in one hand, and a sword in the other, and will lead him to Moscow at the head of two hundred thousand men." This grand vizier was called Chourlouli-Ali Pacha; he was the son of a peasant of the village of Chourlou. Such an extraction is not held as a reproach among the Turks, who have no ranks of nobility, neither that which is annexed to certain employments, nor that which consists in titles. With them, the dignity and importance of a man's character depend entirely upon his personal services; a custom which prevails in most of the eastern countries, and indeed a custom the most natural, and which might be productive of the most beneficial effects, if posts of honour were conferred on none but men of merit; but the viziers for the most part are no better than the creatures of a black eunuch, or a favourite female slave.

The first minister soon changed his mind. The king could do nothing but negotiate; but the czar could give money, which he did; and even made the money of Charles serve him on this occasion. The military chest which he took at Pultowa furnished him with new arms against the vanquished king; and it was no longer the question at court, whether war should be made upon the Russians. The interest of the czar was all powerful at the Porte, which granted such honours to his envoy as the Muscovite ministers had never before enjoyed at Constantinople. He was allowed to have a seraglio, that is to say, a palace in the quarter of the Franks, and the liberty of conversing with other



foreign ministers. The czar even thought he might demand that General Mazeppa should be put into his hands, as Charles had caused the unhappy Patkul to be delivered up to him. Chourlouli-Ali Pacha knew not how to refuse any thing to a prince who made his demands with millions in his hand. Thus the very same grand vizier who had before promised in the most solemn manner to lead the king of Sweden into Muscovy with two hundred thousand men, dared to propose to him to consent to the sacrifice of General Mazeppa. Charles was enraged at this demand. It is hard to say how far the vizier might have pushed the affair, had not Mazeppa, who was now seventy years of age, died exactly at this juncture. The grief and indignation of the king were greatly augmented, when he learned, that Tolstoy, now become the czar's ambassador at the Porte, was publicly attended by the Swedes that had been made slaves at Pultowa, and that those brave soldiers were every day exposed to sale in the market at Constantinople. Nay, the Russian ambassador said aloud, that the Mussulman troops at Bender were placed there more with a view to secure the king's person than to do him any honour.

Charles, abandoned by the grand vizier, and vanquished by the czar's money in Turkey, as he had before been by his arms in the Ukraine, saw himself deceived and despised by the Porte, and almost a prisoner among the Tartars. His attendants began to despair. He himself alone remained firm, and never appeared dejected even for a moment. The sultan he believed to be ignorant of the intrigues of Chourlouli-Ali, his grand vizier; he resolved, therefore, to acquaint him with them, and Poniatowsky took the charge of this hazardous enterprise. The grand seignor goes every Friday to the mosque, surrounded by his solaks, a kind of guards, whose turbans are ornamented with such high feathers that they conceal the sultan from the sight of the people. When any one has a petition to present to the grand seignor, he endeavours to mingle with the guards, and holds the petition aloft. Sometimes the sultan deigns to receive it himself;

but he oftener orders an aga to take charge of it, and has the petitions brought to him on his return from the mosque. There is no fear of any one daring to importune him with useless memorials and trifling petitions, as less is written at Constantinople in a whole year, than they do at Paris in one day. There is still less danger of any memorials being presented against the ministers, to whom the sultan often sends them without reading. Poniatowsky had only this method to convey the king of Sweden's complaints to the grand seignor. He drew up a heavy charge against the grand vizier. M. de Feriol, then the French ambassador, and who gave me an account of the whole affair, had the memorial translated into the Turkish tongue. A Greek was hired to present it. This Greek, having mingled with the guards of the grand seignor, held the paper so high for a long time, and made such a noise, that the sultan observed him, and took the memorial himself.

This method of presenting memorials to the sultan against his viziers, was frequently employed. A Swede called Le-  
loing, gave in another petition a few days after. Thus, in the Turkish empire, was Charles XII. reduced to the necessity of employing the same expedients with an oppressed subject.

Some days after this, the sultan sent the king of Sweden, as the only answer to his complaints, five-and-twenty Arabian horses, one of which, that had carried his highness, was covered with a saddle and housing enriched with precious stones, with stirrups of massy gold. This present was accompanied with an obliging letter, but conceived in general terms, and such as gave reason to suspect that the minister had done nothing without the sultan's consent. Chourlouli-Ali, too, who knew the art of dissembling, sent the king five very curious horses. But Charles, with a lofty air, said to the person who brought them, "return to your master, and tell him I never receive a present from an enemy."

Poniatowsky having already dared to present a memorial against the grand vizier, next formed the bold design of



deposing him. He knew that this vizier was disagreeable to the sultana-mother, that Kislár-Aga, the chief of the black eunuchs, and the aga of the janissaries, also hated him; he therefore prompted them all three to speak against him. It was something very surprising to see a christian, a Pole, an uncommissioned agent of the king of Sweden, who had taken refuge among the Turks, caballing almost openly at the Porte, against a viceroy of the Ottoman empire, who, at the same time, was both an able minister and a favourite of his master. Poniatowsky could never have succeeded, and the idea of such a project alone would have cost him his life, if a power superior to all those that operated in his favour, had not given a finishing stroke to the fortune of the grand vizier Chourlouli.

The sultan had a young favourite, who afterwards governed the Ottoman empire, and was killed in Hungary in 1716, at the battle of Peterwaradin, gained over the Turks by Prince Eugene of Savoy. His name was Coumourgi-Ali Pacha. His birth was very little different from that of Chourlouli, being the son of a coal-heaver, as Coumourgi signifies, *coumour* in the Turkish language signifying coal. The emperor Achmet II. uncle of Achmet III. having met Coumourgi, while yet an infant, in a little wood near Adrianople, was struck with his extreme beauty, and caused him to be conducted to the seraglio. He was beloved by Mustapha, the eldest son and successor of Mahomet; and Achmet III. made him his favourite. He had then no other place but that of selictar-aga, sword-bearer of the crown. His extreme youth did not allow him to pretend to the post of grand vizier, but yet he had the ambition to aspire to it. The Swedish faction could never win the affections of this favourite. He was never the friend of Charles, nor of any other christian prince, nor of any of their ministers, but on this occasion he served the king without intending it; he united himself with the Sultanness Valide, and the great officers of the Porte, to depose Chourlouli, whom they all hated. This old minister, who had long and faithfully served



his master, fell a victim to the caprice of a boy, and the intrigues of a foreigner. He was stripped of his dignity and riches; his wife, the daughter of the late Sultan Mustapha, was also taken from him; and himself was banished to Caffa, formerly called Theodosia, in Crim Tartary. The bull, that is to say, the seal of the empire, was given to Numa Couprougli, grandson of the great Couprougli, who took Candia. This new vizier was, what ill-informed Christians can hardly believe it possible for a Turk to be, a man of inflexible virtue, a scrupulous observer of the law, and one who frequently opposed justice to the will of the Sultan. He could not endure to hear of a war against Muscovy, which he treated as unjust and unnecessary; but the same attachment to his law that prevented his making war upon the czar contrary to the faith of treaties, made him respect the duties of hospitality toward the king of Sweden. He would say to his master, "The law forbids you to attack the czar, who has not offended you; but it commands you to succour the king of Sweden, who is an unfortunate prince in your dominions." To this prince he sent eight hundred purses; (every purse containing five hundred crowns) and advised him to return peaceably to his own dominions, either through the territories of the emperor of Germany, or in some of the French vessels, which were then in the port of Constantinople, and which M. de Feriol, the French ambassador at the Porte, offered to Charles to conduct him to Marseilles. Count Poniatowsky negotiated more than ever with this minister, and acquired such a superiority in these negotiations with an incorruptible vizier, as the gold of the Muscovites was unable to dispute. The Russian faction thought their best resource was to poison such a dangerous negotiator. They accordingly won over one of his domestics, who was to give him the poison in a dish of coffee; but the crime was discovered before it was carried into execution; the poison was found in the hands of the domestic, contained in a small vial, which was carried to the grand seignor. The prisoner was tried in a full divan, and condemned to

the gallies; for the justice of the Turks never punishes with death those crimes which have not been executed.

Charles XII., who could never be persuaded but that, sooner or later, he should be able to engage the Turkish empire in a war against Muscovy, rejected every proposal which was held out for his peaceable return home; and never ceased to represent to the Turks the formidable power of that very czar whom he had so long despised; his emissaries were perpetually insinuating that Peter Alexiowitz wanted to make himself master of the navigation of the Black Sea; and that after having subdued the Cossacks, he would carry his arms into Crim Tartary. Sometimes these representations animated the Porte, at others the Russian ministers rendered them of no avail.

While Charles XII. suffered his fate to depend upon the caprice of viziers, and while he was alternately receiving favours and affronts from a foreign power, presenting petitions to the sultan, and subsisting upon his bounty in a desert, all his enemies, awakened from their former lethargy, invaded his dominions.

The battle of Pultowa was the first signal to a revolution in Poland. King Augustus returned to that country, protesting against his abdication, and the peace of Altranstad, and publicly accusing Charles, whom he no longer feared, of robbery and cruelty. He immediately imprisoned Fingstein and Imhoff, his plenipotentiaries, who had signed his abdication, as if in so doing they had exceeded their orders, and betrayed their master. His Saxon troops, which had been the pretext of his dethronement, conducted him back to Warsaw, accompanied by most of the Polish palatines, who had formerly sworn fidelity to him, and had afterwards taken the same oath to Stanislaus, and now come to do it again to Augustus. Siniausky himself rejoined his party, and, having lost the idea of becoming king, was content to remain grand-general of the crown. Fleming, his first minister, who had been obliged to quit Saxony, for a time, for fear of being delivered up with Patkul, now contributed

by his address, to bring back to his master's interest a great part of the Polish nobility.

The pope absolved the people from the oath of allegiance which they had taken to Stanislaus. This step of the Holy Father was exceedingly apropos, and, supported by the forces of Augustus, was of considerable weight: it strengthened the credit of the court of Rome in Poland, who had no inclination at that time to contest with the sovereign pontiff their chimerical right of interfering in the temporal concerns of princes. Every one voluntarily returned to the government of Augustus, and received, without repugnance, a useless absolution, which the nuncio did not fail to represent as absolutely necessary.

The power of Charles and the grandeur of Sweden were now drawing toward their last period. More than ten crowned heads had long beheld, with fear and envy, the Swedish power extending itself far beyond its natural bounds, on the other side of the Baltic sea, from the Duna to the Elbe. The fall of Charles, and his absence, revived the interested views and jealousies of all these princes, which had for a long time been laid asleep by treaties, and by their inability to break them.

The czar, more powerful than all of them put together, profited by his late victory: he took Wibourg and all Carelia, overrun Finland with troops, laid siege to Riga, and sent a body of forces into Poland to aid Augustus in recovering his throne. This emperor was at that time what Charles had been formerly, the arbiter of Poland and the North; but he consulted only his interest, while, on the other hand, Charles had never hearkened to any thing but his ideas of revenge and glory. The Swedish monarch had succoured his allies and destroyed his enemies, without reaping the least fruit from his victories; the czar, conducting himself more like a prince, and less like a hero, would not assist the king of Poland but on condition that Livonia should be ceded to him; and that that province, for which Augustus



had kindled the war, should remain for ever in the possession of the Muscovites.

The king of Denmark, forgetting the treaty of Travendal, as Augustus had that of Altranstad, began from that time to think of making himself master of the duchies of Holstein and Bremen, to which he renewed his pretensions. The king of Prussia had ancient claims upon Swedish Pomerania, which he now resolved to revive. The duke of Mecklenburgh saw with envy that the Swedes were still in possession of Wismar, the finest town in the duchy; that prince was to marry a niece of the Russian emperor; and the czar wanted only a pretext for establishing himself in Germany, after the example of the Swedes. George, elector of Hanover, sought to enrich himself, on his side, with the spoils of Charles. The bishop of Munster, too, would have been willing enough to avail himself of some of his claims, had he been able to support them.

Twelve or thirteen thousand Swedes defended Pomerania, and the other countries which Charles possessed in Germany; it was there that the war was most likely to begin. This storm alarmed the emperor and his allies. It is a law of the empire, that whoever invades one of its provinces, shall be reputed an enemy to the whole Germanic body.

But there was still a greater embarrassment; all these princes except the czar were then united against Louis XIV. whose power, for a long time, had been as formidable to the empire as that of Charles.

Germany, at the beginning of this century, had found itself hard pressed from south to north, between the armies of France and Sweden. The French had passed the Danube, and the Swedes the Oder, and had their forces, victorious as they then were, been joined together, the empire had been undone. But the same fatality that ruined Sweden, had likewise humbled France: Sweden, however, had still resources left; and Louis carried on the war with vigour,

though without success. Had Pomerania and the duchy of Bremen become the theatre of war, it was to be feared that the empire would suffer by it; and that being weakened on that side, it would be less able to stand against Louis XIV. To prevent this danger, the emperor, the princes of the empire, Anne, queen of England, and the states general of the United Provinces, concluded at the end of the year 1709, one of the most singular treaties that ever was signed.

It was stipulated by these powers, that the war against the Swedes should not be made in Pomerania, nor in any other of the German provinces, but that the enemies of Charles XII. should be at liberty to attack him any where else. The czar and the king of Poland acceded to this treaty, in which they caused to be inserted an article as extraordinary as the treaty itself; this was, that the twelve thousand Swedes who were in Pomerania, should not be permitted to leave it to defend their other provinces.

To secure the execution of the treaty, they proposed to raise an army to preserve this imaginary neutrality. This army was to encamp on the banks of the Oder. An unheard of novelty, surely, to raise an army to prevent a war! Even the princes who were to pay the army, were most of them interested in beginning a war which they thus pretended to prevent. The treaty also imported, that the army should be composed of the troops of the emperor, of the king of Prussia, of the elector of Hanover, of the landgrave of Hesse, and of the bishop of Munster.

The issue of this project was such as might naturally have been expected; it was not carried into execution. The princes who were to have furnished their contingents for completing the army, contributed nothing: there were not two regiments formed. Every body talked of a neutrality, but nobody observed it; and all the princes of the north, who had any interest in quarrelling with the king of Sweden, were left at full liberty to dispute with each other the spoils of that prince.

At this juncture, the czar, after having quartered his troops in Lithuania, and having given orders for the siege of Riga, returned to Moscow, to display to his people a sight as new as any thing he had hitherto done in the kingdom : this was a triumph of nearly the same nature with that of the ancient Romans. He made his entry into Moscow on the first of January, 1710, under seven triumphal arches, erected in the streets, and adorned with every thing which the climate could furnish, or which a flourishing commerce, rendered such by his care, could produce. A regiment of guards began the procession, followed by the pieces of artillery taken from the Swedes at Lasno and Pultowa, each being drawn by eight horses, covered with scarlet housings hanging down to the ground; then came the standards, kettle-drums, and colours, won at those two battles, carried by the very officers and soldiers who had taken them; and all the spoils were followed by the choicest troops of the czar. After they had filed off, there appeared in a chariot, made on purpose,\* the litter of Charles XII. found on the field of battle at Pultowa, all shattered with two cannon shot : behind this litter marched all the prisoners two and two : amongst them appeared Count Piper, first minister of Sweden, the celebrated Mareschal Renschild, the Count de Lewenhaupt, the Generals Slidenback, Stackelberg, and Hamilton, and all the officers who were afterwards dispersed through Great Russia. Immediately after these, appeared the czar himself, mounted on the same horse which he rode at the battle of Pultowa. A little after him came the generals who had had a share in the success of the day. Then followed another regiment of guards; and the wagons loaded with the Swedish ammunition, closed the whole.

This pageantry was accompanied with the ringing of all the bells in Moscow, with the sound of drums, kettle-drums,

\* Mr. Norberg, confessor of Charles XII., here corrects the author, and affirms that the litter was carried by the soldiers. For the truth of these ESSENTIAL circumstances, we refer to those who saw them.



trumpets; and an infinite number of musical instruments were heard, alternately with the salute of two hundred pieces of cannon, and the acclamations of five hundred thousand men, who, at every pause the czar made in this triumphal entry, cried out, "long live the emperor our father."

This dazzling exhibition augmented the people's veneration for his person, and perhaps made him appear greater in their eyes than the real advantages they had derived from him. Meanwhile he continued the blockade of Riga. His generals made themselves masters of the rest of Livonia, and part of Finland. At the same time the king of Denmark came with his whole fleet to make a descent upon Sweden, where he landed seventeen thousand men, whom he left under the command of the Count de Reventlau.

Sweden was at that time governed by a regency composed of several senators, whom the king appointed when he departed from Stockholm. The body of the senate looking upon the government as their right, became jealous of the regency. The state suffered by these divisions: but when, after the battle of Pultowa, the first news they heard at Stockholm was, that the king was at Bender, at the mercy of the Turks and Tartars, and that the Danes had disembarked in Schonen, and had taken the town of Helsimburgh, their jealousies then vanished, and they turned their whole attention to the preservation of Sweden. Sweden was now drained, in a great measure, of regular troops; for though Charles had always made his great expeditions at the head of small armies, yet the innumerable battles he had fought in the space of nine years, the necessity he was under of continually recruiting his forces, the maintaining his garrisons, and the standing army he was constantly obliged to keep in Finland, Ingria, Livonia, Pomerania, Bremen, and Verdun, had cost Sweden, during the course of the war, above two hundred and fifty thousand men; so that there did not remain eight thousand of the ancient troops, which, with the new raised militia, were the only resources Sweden had.

The nation is naturally warlike ; and every people insensibly adopts the disposition of its king. They talked of nothing from one end of the country to the other, but the prodigious achievements of Charles and his generals, and of the old regiments that fought under them at Narva, Duna, Clissau, Pultusk, and Hollosin. The lowest of the Swedes acquired from them a spirit of emulation and glory. Their affection for their king, their pity for his misfortunes, and their implacable hatred to the Danes, contributed to increase this ardour. In several other countries the peasants are slaves, or treated as such ; but here they compose a part of the state, are considered as citizens, and, of consequence, are capable of more refined sentiments ; so that this new raised militia became, in a short time, the best troops of the north.

General Steinbock put himself, by order of the regency, at the head of eight thousand of the ancient troops, and about twelve thousand of these new militia, to go in pursuit of the Danes, who ravaged all the country about Helsimburgh, and had already laid contributions on some of the more inland provinces.

There was neither time nor opportunity to give clothing to the new militia, so that most of these boors came in their coarse linen frocks, having pistols tied to their girdles with cords. Steinbock, at the head of this extraordinary army, overtook the Danes about three leagues from Helsimburgh on the 10th of March, 1710. He wished to have given his troops a few days rest, to raise intrenchments, and to allow his new soldiers a sufficient time to accustom themselves to behold the enemy ; but all the peasants called out for battle the very day they arrived.

Several of the officers then present, have since assured me that they saw every soldier foaming with rage and choler, so great is the national hatred of the Swedes to the Danes. Steinbock profited by this ardour of their minds, which in the day of battle, is of as much consequence as military discipline, and attacked the Danes. A circumstance was now display-

ed of which, perhaps, the whole history of mankind cannot furnish above two examples : the new raised militia, in their first assault, equalled the intrepidity of veteran soldiers. Two regiments of these ill armed peasants cut in pieces the regiment of the king of Denmark's guards, of which there remained only ten men alive.

The Danes, entirely defeated, retired under the cannon of Helsimburgh. The passage from Sweden to Zealand is so short, that the king of Denmark received the news at Copenhagen of the defeat of his army in Sweden the very same day on which it happened, and sent his fleet to bring off the shattered remains of his army. The Danes quitted Sweden with precipitation five days after the battle ; but being unable to carry off their horses, and unwilling to leave them to the enemy, they killed them all in the environs of Helsimburgh, and set fire to their provisions, burning their corn and baggage, and leaving in Helsimburgh four thousand wounded men, of whom the greatest part died with the infection occasioned by so many dead horses, and for want of provisions, of which even their countrymen deprived them, to prevent the Swedes from enjoying it.

At the same time, the peasants of Delecarlia, having in the depths of their forests heard the report of their king's being a prisoner among the Turks, sent a deputation to the regency of Stockholm, and offered to go at their own expense, to the number of twenty thousand, and deliver their master from the hands of his enemies. This proposal, which was better calculated to display their courage and affection to their king than to produce any real advantage, was received with pleasure, though it was not accepted ; and the senators took care to acquaint the king with it, at the same time that they sent him an account of the battle of Helsimburgh.

Charles received this pleasing news in his camp near Bender in the month of July, 1710 ; and a little time after another event happened which contributed still more to strengthen his hopes.



The grand vizier Couprougli, who opposed all his designs, was deposed about two months after he had entered into his office. The little court of Charles XII. and those who still adhered to him in Poland, gave out that Charles made and unmade the viziers, and governed the Turkish empire from his retreat at Bender; but he had no share in the disgrace of that favourite. The rigid probity of the vizier is said to have been the sole cause of his fall. His predecessor had not paid the janissaries out of the imperial treasury, but with the money he had raised by extortion: Couprougli paid them out of the treasury. Achmet reproached him with preferring the interest of the subject to that of the emperor: "Your predecessor, Chourlouli," said he, "knew how to find other means to pay my troops." "If," replied the grand vizier, "he had the art of enriching your highness by rapine, it is an art of which I glory in being ignorant."

The profound secrecy observed in the seraglio seldom permits such particulars to transpire to the public; but this fact was published at the same time with Couprougli's disgrace. This vizier's boldness, however, did not cost him his head, because true virtue can frequently cause itself to be respected, even by those whom it offends. He was permitted to retire to the island of Negropont. These particulars I learned from the letters of M. Bru, my relation, first interpreter to the Ottoman Porte, and I have related them in order to display the true spirit of that government.

After this, the grand seignor recalled from Aleppo Baltagi Mehemet, Pacha of Syria, who had been grand vizier before Chourlouli. The *Baltagis* of the seraglio, so called from *Balta*, which signifies an axe, are slaves employed to cut wood for the use of the princes of the Ottoman blood and the sultans. This vizier had been a Baltagi in his youth, and had ever since retained the name of that office, according to the custom of the Turks, who take without blush, the name of their first profession, or that of their father, or even the place of their birth.

At the time Baltagi Mehemet was a slave in the seraglio, he was so happy as to do several little services to Prince Achmet, who was then a prisoner of state in the reign of his brother Mustapha. It is permitted the princes of Ottoman blood to keep for their pleasure a few women who are past the age of child bearing, (an age that arrives very early in Turkey,) but still handsome enough to please. As soon as Achmet became sultan, he gave one of these female slaves, whom he had ardently loved, in marriage to Baltagi Mehemet. This woman, by her intrigues, made her husband grand vizier; another intrigue displaced him; and a third made him grand vizier again.

When Baltagi Mehemet came to receive the bull of the empire, he found the party of the king of Sweden prevailing in the seraglio. The Sultanness Valide, Ali-Coumourgi, the favourite of the grand seignor, the Kisklar-Aga, chief of the black eunuchs, and the aga of the janissaries, inclined to a war with the czar: the sultan was determined in the same resolution; and the first order he gave the grand vizier was to go and attack the Muscovites with two hundred thousand men. Baltagi Mehemet had never made a campaign, yet he was not the idiot that Swedish malcontents have represented him. He said to the grand seignor, upon receiving a sabre from him, adorned with precious stones, "your highness knows that I was brought up to handle an axe to cleave wood, and not a sword to command your armies: I will, notwithstanding, do my best to serve you; though I should not succeed, remember I have intreated you, beforehand, not to impute the blame to me." The sultan assured him of his friendship, and the vizier prepared to carry his orders into execution.

The first step of the Ottoman Porte was, to imprison the Russian ambassador in the castle of the seven towers. It is the custom of the Turks to begin by arresting the ministers of those princes against whom they declare war. Strict observers of hospitality in every thing else, in this they violate

the most sacred law of nations. They commit this act of injustice under the pretext of equity, believing, or at least desirous to have it thought, that they never undertake any but just wars, because they are consecrated by the approbation of the mufti. Upon this principle, they take up arms, as they imagine, to chastise the breakers of treaties, of which they themselves are often the first violators; and think they have a right to punish the ambassadors of those kings with whom they are at enmity, as being accomplices in the treachery of their masters.

To this manner of reasoning, they join a ridiculous contempt which they affect to entertain for christian princes and their ambassadors, the latter of whom they consider in no other light than as the consuls of merchants.

The han of Crim Tartary, whom we call the kam, received orders to hold himself in readiness with forty thousand Tartars. This prince governs Nagai, Budziack, part of Circassia, and all Crim Tartary, a province known in antiquity by the name of Taurica Chersonesus, into which the Greeks carried their arms and commerce, and founded powerful cities, and into which the Genoese since penetrated when they were masters of the trade of Europe. In this country are to be seen the ruins of some Greek cities, and some monuments of the Genoese, which still subsist in the midst of desolation and barbarism.

The kam is called emperor by his own subjects: but this grand title does not make him less a slave of the Porte. The Ottoman blood, from which the kams are sprung, and the right they pretend to the empire of the Turks, in case an heir should be wanting to the throne, render their family respectable, and their persons formidable, even to the sultan himself. This is the reason that the grand seignor dares not venture to destroy the race of the kams of Tartary, though indeed he seldom allows any of these princes to reign to a great age. Their conduct is closely inspected by the neighbouring pachas, their dominions are surrounded with janis



saries, their inclinations thwarted by the grand viziers, and their designs always suspected. If the Tartars complain of the kam, the Porte deposes him under that pretext; if he is too much beloved by his people, that is still a higher crime, for which he is most certainly punished. Thus almost all of them are driven from sovereign power into exile, and end their days at Rhodes, which is generally their prison and their grave.

The Tartars, their subjects, are the greatest thieves on earth, and what appears impossible, are at the same time the most hospitable people. They will go fifty leagues to attack a caravan, or pillage a village; yet when any stranger of any rank whatever happens to pass through their country, he is not only received, lodged, and maintained every where, but through whatever places he passes, the inhabitants dispute with each other the honour of having him for their guest, and the master of the house, his wife, and daughters, are ambitious to serve him. This inviolable regard to hospitality they have inherited from their ancestors the Scythians, and they still preserve it on account of the small number of strangers that travel among them, and the low prices of all sorts of provisions, which render the practice of such a virtue not exceedingly burdensome.

When the Tartars go to war in conjunction with the Ottoman army, they are maintained by the grand seignor; but the booty they get is their only pay; and hence it is that they are much fitter for plundering than fighting.

The kam, won over by the presents and intrigues of the king of Sweden, at first had obtained leave to appoint the general rendezvous of the troops at Bender, and even under the eye of Charles, in order to convince that monarch that the war was undertaken solely for his sake.

The new vizier Baltagi Mehemet, not lying under the same engagements, would not flatter a foreign prince so highly. He changed this disposition, and assembled this great army at Adrianople, on whose vast and fertile plains

the Turks usually draw up their armies, when going to make war upon the Christians : there the troops that arrive from Asia and Africa repose and refresh themselves for a few weeks. But the grand vizier, in order to be beforehand with the czar, allowed the army but three days rest, and then marched to the Danube, and from thence to Bessarabia.

The Turkish troops at this day are not so formidable as they were in ancient times, when they conquered so many kingdoms in Asia, Africa, and Europe ; when, by the strength of their body, their valour, and numbers, they triumphed over enemies less robust and worse disciplined than themselves. But now that the Christians are more expert in the art of war, in a pitched battle they almost always beat the Turks, and even with unequal numbers. If the Ottoman empire hath made some conquests lately, it hath been only over the republic of Venice, more esteemed for wisdom than for war, defended by strangers, and little succoured by the Christian princes, who are always divided among themselves.

The janissaries and spahis make their attack in a disorderly manner, incapable of attending to the commands of their general, or rallying themselves. Their cavalry, which ought to be excellent, considering the goodness and activity of their horses, is not able to withstand the shock of the German horse ; and their infantry did not yet know how to make use of fixed bayonets. Besides all this, the Turks have not had an able general since the time of Couprougli, who conquered the isle of Candia ; a slave, brought up in the idleness and solitude of a seraglio, made a vizier through favour, and a general against his will, conducting an army raised in a hurry, without discipline or experience, against Russian troops, hardened by twelve years war, and proud of having conquered the Swedes.

The czar, to all appearance, must have vanquished Baltagi Mehemet ; but he was guilty of the same fault with regard

to the Turks, which the king of Sweden had committed with respect to himself; he despised his enemy too much. On the first news of the Turkish preparation he left Moscow, and, having given orders for turning the siege of Riga into a blockade, assembled fourscore thousand men on the frontiers of Poland.\* With this army he took the road through Moldavia and Wallachia, formerly the country of the Dacians, but now inhabited by Greek Christians, tributaries to the grand seignor.

Moldavia was, at that time, governed by Prince Cantemir, of Greek extraction, and who united in his person the talents of the ancient Greeks, the knowledge of letters and of arms. He was supposed to have descended from the famous Timur, known by the name of Tamerlane. This origin appearing more honourable than a Greek one, they attempt to prove the reality of the descent by the name of this conqueror. *Timur*, say they, resembles *Temir*; the title of *Kam*, which Timur possessed before he conquered Asia, is included in the word *Cantemir*; therefore Prince Cantemir is descended from Tamerlane. Such are the foundations of most genealogies!

But from whatever family Cantemir descended, he owed all his fortune to the Ottoman Porte. Yet, scarcely had he received the investiture of his principality, when he betrayed the Turkish emperor, his benefactor, to the czar, from whom he expected greater advantages. He flattered himself that the conqueror of Charles XII. would easily triumph over a vizier of so little reputation, who had never made a campaign, and who had chosen for his kiaia, that is to say, his lieutenant, the intendant of the customs in Turkey. He made no doubt but all the Greeks would readily follow his standard, as the Greek patriarch had encouraged him in his

\* The Chaplain Norberg asserts, that the czar compelled every fourth man in his dominions, able to bear arms, to follow him to the field. Had this been true, his army would have amounted, at least, to two millions of men.



revolt. The czar, therefore, having made a secret treaty with this prince, and received him into his army, advanced into the country; and in the month of June, 1711, arrived on the northern banks of the river Hierassus, now Pruth, near Jassy, the capital of Moldavia.

As soon as the grand vizier heard that Peter Alexiowitz was advancing on that side, he immediately quitted his camp, and following the course of the Danube, resolved to cross the river on a bridge of boats, near to a town called Saccia, at the same place where Darius formerly built the bridge that went by his name. The Turkish army used such diligence, that they soon came in sight of the Muscovites, the river Pruth lying between them.

The czar, sure of the prince of Moldavia, never thought that the Moldavians would fail him. But the prince and his subjects have very often different interests. The Moldavians preferred the Turkish government, which is never fatal to the great, and which affects a great lenity and mildness to its tributary states: they dreaded the Christians, and especially the Muscovites, who had always treated them with inhumanity; they, therefore, carried all their provisions to the Ottoman army; the contractors also, who had engaged to furnish the Russians with provisions, executed in favour of the grand vizier the very agreement which they had made with the czar. The Wallachians, neighbours to the Moldavians, discovered the same attachment to the Turks; so much had the remembrance of the Russian cruelties alienated all their minds.

The czar, thus deceived in his hopes, which, perhaps, he had too eagerly entertained, saw his army on a sudden destitute of forage and provisions. The soldiers deserted in troops, and his army was soon reduced to less than thirty thousand men, ready to perish with hunger. The czar experienced the same misfortunes upon the banks of the Pruth, in having trusted himself to Cantemir, as Charles XII. had done at Pultowa, in relying upon Mazeppa. Meanwhile

the Turks passed the river, hemmed in the Russians, and formed an intrenched camp before them. It is surprising that the czar did not dispute their passage, or, at least, repair this error by attacking the Turks immediately after their landing, instead of giving them time to destroy his army with hunger and fatigue. It would seem, indeed, that Peter did every thing in this campaign to hasten his own ruin. He found himself without provisions, having the river Pruth behind him, an hundred and fifty thousand Turks before him, and forty thousand Tartars continually harassing his army on the right and left. In this extremity, he openly said, "Here am I, at least, in as bad a situation as my brother Charles was at Pultowa."

Count Poniatowsky, an indefatigable agent of the king of Sweden, was in the grand vizier's army, together with some Poles and Swedes, who all imagined the ruin of the czar to be inevitable.

As soon as Poniatowsky saw that the armies must infallibly come to an engagement, he sent to the king of Sweden, who immediately set out from Bender, accompanied by forty officers, enjoying in idea the pleasure he should have in fighting the emperor of Muscovy. After many losses, and several destructive marches, the czar was driven back to the Pruth, having no other intrenchment than a *chevaux-de-frise* and a few wagons. A few troops of the janissaries and spahis attacked his army so disadvantageously situated; but their attack was disorderly, and the Russians defended themselves with a firmness which the presence of their prince, added to their despair, gave them.

The Turks were twice repulsed. Next day M. Poniatowsky advised the grand vizier to starve the Russian army, which being in want of every thing, would, together with the emperor, be obliged, in a day's time, to surrender at discretion.

The czar hath, since that time, more than once declared, that in his whole life he never felt any thing so tormenting

as the agitation in which he passed the night: he revolved in his thoughts, that all he had been doing for so many years to promote the glory and happiness of his country, that so many grand undertakings, which had been already interrupted by wars, were now, perhaps, going to perish with him, before they were fully accomplished; and that he must either be destroyed by famine, or attack about an hundred and eighty thousand men with feeble and dispirited troops, diminished one half in their number, the cavalry almost entirely dismounted, and the infantry exhausted with hunger and fatigue.

In the beginning of the night, he had sent for General Czeremetoff, and ordered him, without deliberation, or taking his opinion, to have every thing in readiness at the break of day for attacking the Turks with fixed bayonets.

He likewise gave the most positive orders that all the baggage should be burnt, and that every officer should keep but one wagon, in order that, if they were conquered, the enemy might not obtain the booty they expected.

Having regulated every thing with the general for the battle, he retired to his tent, oppressed with grief, and agitated with convulsions, a disorder with which he was often attacked, and which always recurred with redoubled violence when he was under any perturbation of mind. He gave orders that no one should dare to enter his tent in the night, on any pretext whatever: not choosing to receive any remonstrance against a resolution which, though desperate, was necessary; and still less that any one should be a witness of the distressed situation in which he found himself.

In the mean time, the greatest part of the baggage was burnt, as he had ordered. The whole army followed the example, though with much reluctance; and several buried their most valuable effects in the earth. The general officers had already given orders for the march, and were endeavouring to inspire the army with that confidence which they themselves wanted; but the whole soldiery, exhausted



with hunger and fatigue, marched without spirit or hope. The women, with which the army was needlessly crowded, set up the most lamentable cries, which contributed still more to enervate the men; and next morning every one expected death or slavery as the only alternative. This description is by no means exaggerated; it is exactly conformable to the accounts that were given by officers who served in the army.

There was at that time in the Russian camp a woman as extraordinary, perhaps, as the czar himself. She was then only known by the name of Catherine. Her mother was a poor country woman, called Erb-Magden, of the village of Ringen, in Esthonia, a province where the people were serfs or glebe slaves, and which was then under the government of the Swedes. She never discovered her father, and had been baptized by the name of Martha. The vicar of the parish, out of charity, brought her up to the age of fourteen; at which age she went to service at Marienbourg, at the house of a Lutheran minister of that country called Glurk.

In 1702, being then eighteen years of age, she married a Swedish dragoon. The day after her marriage, a party of the Swedish troops having been beat by the Muscovites, the dragoon, who was in the action, was missing, nor could his wife discover whether he had been made prisoner, nor indeed at any time afterwards learn what was become of him.

A few days after she was made a prisoner herself by General Baur, in whose service she staid some time, and afterwards in that of Mareschal Czeremetoff, by whom she was given to Menzikoff, a man who experienced the greatest vicissitudes of fortune, having been raised from a pastry cook's boy to the rank of a general and a prince, but who was at last stripped of every honour, and banished into Siberia, where he died in misery and despair.

It was at a supper given by Prince Menzikoff that the

emperor first saw her, and instantly became enamoured of her. He privately married her in the year 1707; not seduced to it by female artifices, but because he thought he had met with a woman capable of seconding his schemes, and even of maintaining them after his death. He had long before divorced his first wife Ottokesa, the daughter of a boyard, who was accused of opposing the alterations which he made in his dominions; a crime in the eyes of the czar the most unpardonable, as he would suffer nobody in his family whose thoughts did not agree with his own. He thought he had now found in this foreign slave the qualities of a sovereign, though she had none of the virtues of her sex: he, however, for her sake, disdained the prejudices that would have governed a man of common ideas, and therefore had her crowned empress. The same talents which made her the wife of Peter Alexiowitz, procured her the empire after the death of her husband. Europe hath beheld with surprise this woman who was never able to read\* or write, and compensating for her education and her weaknesses by her firmness, and filling with glory the throne of a legislator.

At the time she married the czar, she renounced the Lutheran religion, in which she had been born, for that of Muscovy; in which religion she was re-baptized, according to the rites of the Russian church, and instead of the name of Martha, she took that of Catherine, by which she was ever after known. This woman happening to be in the

\* The *Sieur de la Mottray* pretends that she had a good education, and could both read and write very well. The contrary of this is known to all the world. The peasants of Livonia are never permitted to learn either to read or write, owing to an ancient privilege, which is termed the benefit of clergy, formerly established among the barbarians who were converted to Christianity, and still subsisting in this country. The memoirs from which this anecdote is taken farther adds, that the Princess Elizabeth, afterwards empress, always signed for her mother, from the time she could write.

camp at Pruth, she held a council with the general officers and the Vice-Chancellor Schaffirof, while the czar was in his tent.

In this conference it was resolved to ask a peace of the Turks, and endeavour to persuade the czar to agree to it. The vice-chancellor wrote a letter to the grand vizier in his master's name, which letter the czarina carried into the emperor's tent, notwithstanding his prohibition : and having by tears and entreaties prevailed upon him to sign it, she immediately collected all her jewels, money, and most valuable effects, and even borrowed of the general officers; which sum being amassed, formed a considerable present: she then sent it, with the letter signed by the czar, to Osman Aga, lieutenant to the grand vizier. Mehemet Baltagi at first answered with the lofty air of a vizier, and a conqueror, "let the czar send me his prime minister, and I shall then consider what is to be done." The Vice-Chancellor Schaffirof, upon this, immediately set off to the Turkish camp, provided with some presents, which he publicly offered to the grand vizier, sufficient to show him they stood in need of his clemency, but too inconsiderable to corrupt his integrity.

The first demand the vizier made was, that the czar should surrender at discretion with the whole army. The vice-chancellor replied, that his master was going to attack him in a quarter of an hour, and that the Russians would perish to a man, rather than submit to such infamous conditions. Osman joined his remonstrances to the demand of Schaffirof.

Mehemet Baltagi was no warrior; he saw that the janisaries had been repulsed the evening before, so that Osman easily prevailed on him not to expose to the hazard of a battle such certain advantages. He therefore granted at first, a suspension of hostilities for six hours, during which they should agree upon the conditions of the treaty.

During the parley, there happened a little incident which may serve to show that the Turks often pay more regard to their word than is in general imagined. Two Italian gen



flemen, relations of M. Brillo, lieutenant colonel of a regiment of grenadiers in the czar's service, having gone in quest of forage, were taken prisoners by some Tartars, who brought them to the camp, and offered to sell them to an officer of the janissaries. The Turk, enraged at their daring to violate the truce, arrested the Tartars, and carried them himself before the grand vizier, together with the two prisoners.

The vizier sent back the two gentlemen to the czar's camp, and ordered the Tartars who had been chiefly concerned in the transaction, to be beheaded.

In the mean time the kam of Tartary opposed the conclusion of the treaty, which would deprive him of all hopes of plunder; Poniatowsky seconded the kam with the most persuasive argument: but Osman carried his point against the importunity of the Tartar, and the insinuations of Poniatowsky.

The vizier thought, that by concluding an advantageous peace he should sufficiently serve his master. He insisted that the Muscovites should deliver up Azoph, burn the galleys which lay in that harbour, demolish the important citadels built upon the Palus Mæotis, and give the cannon and ammunition of all those fortresses into the hands of the grand seignor; that the czar should withdraw his troops from Poland; that he should not incommode the little number of Cossacks that were under the protection of the Poles, nor those who depended on the Turks; and that for the future, he should pay the Tartars a subsidy of forty thousand sequins a year; a disagreeable tribute imposed a long time past, but from which the czar had delivered his country.

At last, the treaty was going to be signed, without so much as making mention of the king of Sweden. All that Poniatowsky could obtain of the vizier was, to insert an article, by which the czar engaged not to incommode Charles in his return; and, what is very remarkable, it was stipulated in this article, that the czar and the king of Sweden should be at liberty to make peace if they wished it, and if they could agree upon the conditions.

On these conditions the czar was permitted to retire with his army, cannon, artillery, colours, and baggage. The Turks furnished him with provisions, so that he had plenty of every thing in his camp two hours after the signing of the treaty, which was begun, concluded, and signed the twenty-first day of July, 1711.

Just as the czar, now extricated from this terrible dilemma, was marching off with drums beating and colours flying, the king of Sweden arrived, impatient for the fight, and to behold his enemy in his power. He had rode above fifty leagues from Bender to Jassy. He arrived the very moment the Russians were beginning to retire in peace; but he could not penetrate to the Turkish camp without passing the Pruth by a bridge three leagues distant. Charles, who never did any thing like other men, swam across the river at the hazard of being drowned, and traversed the Russian camp at the risk of being taken; he, however, reached the Turkish army, and alighted at the tent of Poniatowsky, who has related this fact to me both in conversation and in his correspondence. The count came to him with a melancholy air, and told him he had lost an opportunity which, perhaps, he would never be able to recover.

The king, fired with resentment, ran immediately to the tent of the grand vizier, and, with an inflamed countenance, reproached him with the treaty he had concluded. "I have a right," says the grand vizier, with a calm air, "to make peace or war." "But," adds the king, "had you not the whole Russian army in your power?" "Our law orders," answers the vizier gravely, "to give peace to our enemies when they implore our mercy." "And does it command you," resumes the king, in a passion, "to make a bad treaty when you may impose what laws you please? Did it not depend upon you to lead the czar prisoner to Constantinople?"

The Turk, driven to extremity, replied drily, "and who would have governed his empire in his absence? It is not proper that all kings should leave their dominions." Charles made no other answer than by a smile of indignation. He

then threw himself down upon a sophra, and eyeing the vizier with an air of contempt and resentment, stretched out his leg, and entangling his spur in the Turk's robe, purposely tore it; after which he rose up, remounted his horse, and with despair in his heart returned to Bender.

Poniatowski continued some time longer with the grand vizier, to try if he could prevail upon him, by more gentle means, to extort greater concessions from the czar; but the hour of prayer being come, the Turk, without answering a single word, went to wash and to say his prayers.



## BOOK VI.

**ARGUMENT.**—Intrigues at the Ottoman Porte.—The kam of Tartary and the pacha of Bender endeavour to force Charles to depart.—He defends himself with forty domestics against a whole army.—Is taken and treated as a prisoner.

THE fortune of the king of Sweden, so changed from what it had been, persecuted him even in the most trivial circumstances. He found, on his return, his little camp at Bender, and all his apartments, overflowed by the waters of the Nies-ter : he therefore retired to the distance of a few miles, near to the village called Varnitza ; and, as if he had had a secret foreboding of what was to befall him, he there built a large house of stone, capable, on occasion, to sustain an assault for some hours. He even furnished it magnificently, contrary to his usual custom, in order to command respect from the Turks.

He likewise built two other houses, one for his chancery, and the other for his favourite Grothusen, who kept a table at the king's expense. While the king was thus employed in building near Bender, as if he had intended always to remain in Turkey, Baltagi Mehemet, dreading more than ever the intrigues and complaints of this prince at the Porte, had sent the resident of the emperor of Germany to Vienna, to demand a free passage for the king of Sweden through the hereditary dominions of the house of Austria. This envoy in three weeks returned with a promise from the imperial regency that the honours which were due to him should be paid to Charles XII., and that he should be safely conducted to Pomerania.

Application was made to the regency of Vienna, because Charles, the emperor of Germany, who had succeeded Joseph, was then in Spain, disputing the crown of that kingdom with Philip V. While the German envoy was executing this commission at Vienna, the grand vizier sent three pachas

to the king of Sweden, to signify to him that he must quit the Turkish dominions.

The king, who had been informed of the orders with which they were charged, caused immediate notice to be given to them, that if they presumed to make him any proposals contrary to his honour, or to the respect which was due to him, he would have them all three hanged that very moment. The pacha of Thessalonica, who delivered the message, disguised the harshness of the commission under the most respectful terms. Charles finished the audience without deigning to return the least answer. His chancellor, Mullern, who remained with the three pachas, briefly explained to them his master's refusal, which already they sufficiently comprehended by his silence.

The grand vizier did not give up the point; he ordered Ismael Pacha, the new seraskier of Bender, to threaten the king with the sultan's indignation, if he did not make his determination without delay. This seraskier was a man of mild temper and engaging address, which had gained him the good will of Charles, and the friendship of all the Swedes. The king entered into conference with him: but it was only to tell him, that he would not depart till Achmet had granted him two demands—the punishment of the grand vizier, and a hundred thousand men to return with him into Poland.

Baltagi Mehemet knew very well that Charles remained in Turkey only to ruin him; he took care to plant guards along all the roads from Bender to Constantinople, to intercept the king's letters. He did more; he retrenched his "thaim," that is to say, the provision with which the Porte furnishes those princes to whom she grants an asylum. That of the king of Sweden was immense, consisting of five hundred crowns a day in money, and a profusion of every thing that could contribute to maintain a court in splendour and affluence.

As soon as the king understood that the vizier had presumed to retrench his allowance, he turned to the steward

of his household, and said, "Hitherto you have only had two tables, but I command you to have four from to-morrow."

The officers of Charles XII. were accustomed to esteem nothing impossible which their master ordered; at present, however, they had neither money nor provisions, and were obliged to borrow at twenty, thirty, and forty per cent. of the officers, domestics, and janissaries, who were grown rich by the profusion of the king. M. Fabricius, the envoy of Holstein, Jeffreys, the minister of England, with their secretaries and friends, gave all that they had. The king, with his usual stateliness, and without any concern about the morrow, subsisted on these presents, which could not have sufficed him long. It was, therefore, necessary to elude the vigilance of the guards, and to send secretly to Constantinople to borrow money of the European merchants. All refused to lend money to a king who seemed to put himself out of a condition ever to repay them. One English merchant alone, named Cook, ventured to lend him about forty thousand crowns, being content to lose them in case of the king of Sweden's death. This money was brought to the king's little camp just as they began to be in want of every thing, and without hopes of any relief.

In this interval, M. Poniatowsky wrote, from the very camp of the grand vizier, a relation of the campaign at Pruth, in which he accused Baltagi Mehemet of cowardice and treachery. An old janissary, provoked at the weakness of the vizier, and gained moreover by the presents of Poniatowsky, undertook to deliver this account; and having obtained leave of absence, presented the letter with his own hand to the sultan.

Poniatowsky, a few days after, left the camp, and repaired to the Ottoman Porte, to form intrigues against the grand vizier, according to his usual custom.

Circumstances were favourable. The czar, finding himself at liberty, did not hurry himself to perform his engagements; the keys of Azoph did not arrive; the grand vizier, who was answerable for them, and who, with reason,



dreaded the indignation of his master, did not dare to appear in his presence.

The seraglio, at that time, was filled more than ever with intrigues and factions. These cabals, which exist in all courts, and which, in European courts, commonly end with the dismissal of the minister, or at most in his banishment, never fail at Constantinople to occasion the loss of more than one head: they proved fatal to the old vizier Chourlouli, and to Osman, that lieutenant of Baltagi Mehemet, who was the principal author of the peace of Pruth, and had afterwards obtained a considerable post at the Porte. Among Osman's treasures was found the czarina's ring, and twenty thousand pieces of gold of the Saxon and Russian coin, which was a proof that money alone had saved the czar of Muscovy from the precipice, and ruined the affairs of Charles XII. The vizier Baltagi Mehemet was banished to the isle of Lemnos, where he died three years after. The sultan did not seize his effects, either at his banishment or at his death. He was far from being rich, and his poverty is a justification of his character.

To this grand vizier succeeded Jussuf, that is to say, Joseph, whose fortune was as extraordinary as that of his predecessors. He was born on the frontiers of Muscovy, was taken prisoner at six years of age, together with his family, and had been sold to a janissary. He had been for some time a servant in the seraglio, and at last became the second person in that very empire wherein he had been a slave; but he was only the shadow of a minister. The young Selictar-Ali Coumourgî elevated him to that slippery post only while he waited for an occasion to fill it himself; and Jussuf, his creature, had nothing to do but to set the seals of the empire to the will of this favourite. The politics of the Ottoman court seemed to undergo a total alteration, from the very beginning of this vizier's administration. The czar's plenipotentiaries, who remained at Constantinople, both as ambassadors and as hostages, were treated better than ever; the grand vizier confirmed with them the peace of Pruth; but that which mortified the king of Sweden above all was,

to hear that the secret alliance made with the czar at Constantinople, was brought about by the mediation of the ambassadors of England and Holland.

Constantinople, since the time of Charles's retreat to Bender, was become what Rome hath so often been, the centre of the negotiations of Christendom. Count des Allures, the ambassador from France, supported here the interests of Charles and Stanislaus; the minister of the emperor of Germany opposed them; and the same collisions prevailed here between the Swedish and Muscovite factions, with which we have long seen the court of Rome agitated by those of France and Spain.

England and Holland, who seemed to be neuter, were not so in reality; the new commerce which the czar had opened at Petersburg attracted the attention of these two commercial nations.

The English and Dutch will be always for that prince who shall most favour their trade. There was much to be obtained from the czar, and therefore, it is not surprising that the ministers of England and Holland should serve him secretly at the Ottoman Porte. One of the conditions of this new alliance was, that Charles should be immediately obliged to quit the Turkish empire; whether it was that the czar hoped to seize his person on the road, or that he thought Charles less formidable in his own kingdom than in Turkey, where he was always on the point of arming the Ottoman troops against the Russian empire.

The king of Sweden was continually soliciting the Porte to send him back through Poland with a numerous army. The divan, in fact, resolved to send him back with a simple guard of seven or eight thousand men, not as a king whom they wished to assist, but as a guest whom they wanted to get rid of. For this purpose, the Sultan Achmet wrote to him in these terms:

*"Most powerful among the kings, adorer of Jesus, redresser of wrongs and injuries, and protector of justice in the ports and republics of the South and North; shining in majesty, friend*

*of honour and glory, and of our Sublime Porte, CHARLES, KING OF SWEDEN, whose enterprises God crown with success !”*

“As soon as the most illustrious Achmet, formerly Chiaux-Pachi, shall have the honour to present you with this letter, adorned with our imperial seal, be persuaded and convinced of the truth of our intentions therein contained, to wit, that though we did propose, once more, to march our ever victorious army against the czar, yet that prince, to avoid the just resentment which we had conceived at his delaying to execute the treaty concluded on the banks of the Pruth, and afterwards renewed at our Sublime Porte, having surrendered into our hands the castle and city of Azoph, and endeavoured, through the mediation of the ambassadors of England and Holland, our ancient allies, to cultivate a lasting peace with us, we have granted his request, and given to his plenipotentiaries, who remain with us as hostages, our imperial ratification, after having received his from their hands.

“We have given to the most honourable and valiant Delvet Gherai, kam of Budziack, Crim Tartary, Nagay, and Circassia, and to our most sage counsellor and generous seraskier of Bender, Ismael, (may God perpetuate and augment their magnificence and wisdom,) our inviolable and salutary order for your return through Poland, according to your first desire, which hath been renewed to us in your name. You must, therefore, prepare to depart under the auspices of Providence, and with an honourable guard, before the approaching winter, in order to return to your own territories, taking care to pass as a friend through those of Poland.

“Whatever shall be necessary for your journey shall be furnished you by my Sublime Porte, as well in money, as in men, horses, and wagons. We above all things exhort and recommend to you, to give the most positive and precise orders to all the Swedes and other persons in your retinue, to commit no outrage, nor be guilty of any action that may



tend either directly or indirectly to violate this peace and alliance.

“You will by these means preserve our good will, of which we shall endeavour to give you as great and as frequent marks as occasion shall offer. Our troops destined to accompany you shall receive orders conformable to our imperial intentions.”

*Given at our Sublime Porte of Constantinople, the fourteenth of the moon Rebyul Eurech, 1214, which answers to the nineteenth of April, 1712.*

This letter did not yet deprive the king of Sweden of his hopes : he wrote to the sultan, that he should ever retain a grateful remembrance of the favours his highness had bestowed on him, but that he believed the sultan too just to send him back with the simple guard of a flying camp into a country still overrun by the czar's troops. In effect, the emperor of Russia, notwithstanding the first article of the peace of Pruth, by which he engaged himself to withdraw all his troops from Poland, had sent fresh ones into that kingdom ; and what appears surprising, the grand seignor knew nothing of the matter.

The bad policy of the Porte in having always, through vanity, ambassadors from the Christian princes at Constantinople, and not maintaining a single agent at the Christian courts, is the cause that these discover and sometimes conduct the most secret resolutions of the sultan, and that the divan is always in profound ignorance of what is publicly going on in the Christian world.

The sultan, shut up in his seraglio among his women and eunuchs, can see only with the eyes of the grand vizier : that minister, as inaccessible as his master, wholly engrossed with the intrigues of the seraglio, and having no foreign correspondence, is commonly deceived himself, or else deceives the sultan, who deposes or orders him to be strangled for the first fault, in order to choose another minister as igno-

rant or as perfidious, who behaves like his predecessors, and soon shares the same fate.

Such, for the most part, is the inactivity and the profound security of this court, that were the Christian princes to league themselves against it, their fleets might be at the Dardanelles, and their land forces at the gates of Adrianople, before the Turks would dream of defending themselves; but the different interests which will ever divide the christian world, will preserve the Turks from a fate to which, by their want of policy, and by their ignorance of the art of war, both by sea and land, they seem at present exposed.

Achmet was so little informed of what passed in Poland, that he sent an aga to see whether it was true that the czar's troops were still in that country; the king of Sweden's two secretaries, who understood the Turkish language, accompanied the aga, and were to serve as witnesses against him, in case he should make a false report.

This aga saw the truth of the king's assertion with his own eyes, and informed the sultan of every particular. Achmet, fired with indignation, was going to strangle the grand vizier; but the favourite, who protected him, and who thought he should have occasion for him, obtained his pardon, and supported him some time longer in the ministry.

The Russians were now openly espoused by the vizier, and secretly by Ali Coumourgi, who had changed sides; but the sultan was so provoked, the infraction of the treaty was so manifest, and the janissaries, who often make the ministers, the favourites, and even the sultans tremble, demanded war with such clamour, that no one in the seraglio durst offer a more moderate proposal.

The grand seignor immediately committed to the seven towers the Russian ambassadors, who were now as much accustomed to go to prison as to an audience. War was declared afresh against the czar, the horsetails were displayed, and orders were given to all the pachas to assemble an army of two hundred thousand men. The sultan himself

quitted Constantinople, and went to fix his court at Adrianople, that he might be nearer to the seat of war.

In the mean time, a solemn embassy sent to the grand seignor by Augustus, and the republic of Poland, was advancing on the road to Adrianople. At the head of the embassy was the palatine of Mazovia, with a retinue of above three hundred persons.

Every one that composed the embassy was seized and imprisoned in one of the suburbs of the city: never was the king of Sweden's party more sanguine than on this occasion; and yet this great preparation was rendered useless, and all their hopes were again disappointed.

If we may believe a public minister, a man of sagacity and penetration, who resided at that time at Constantinople, young Coumourgi had already other designs in his head than that of disputing a desert country with the czar by a doubtful war. He had proposed to strip the Venetians of the Peloponnesus, now called the Morea, and to make himself master of Hungary.

He waited only for the execution of his great designs till he should have attained the post of grand vizier, from which he was still excluded on account of his youth. In this view it was more for his advantage to be the ally, than the enemy of the czar. It was neither his interest nor his inclination, to keep the king of Sweden any longer, and still less to arm the Turkish empire in his favour. He not only desired to dismiss that prince, but he openly said, that for the future, no christian ambassador ought to be suffered at Constantinople; that all these ministers in ordinary were but so many honourable spies, who corrupted or betrayed the viziers, and had too long influenced the intrigues of the seraglio; and that the Franks settled at Pera, and in the streights of the Levant, were merchants, who needed a consul only, and not an ambassador. The grand vizier, who owed his post and his life to the favourite, and, what was more, stood in fear of him, complied with his intention with the more alacrity, as he had sold himself to the Russians, and hoped by this



means to be revenged on the king of Sweden, who had endeavoured to ruin him. The mufti, a creature of Ali Courmourgi, was also the slave to his will : he had advised the war with Russia, when the favourite wished it ; but the moment this young man changed his opinion, he pronounced it to be unjust : thus was the army hardly assembled before they began to listen to proposals of accommodation. The vice-chancellor Schaffirof, and young Czeremetoff, hostages and plenipotentiaries of the czar at the Porte, promised, after several negotiations, that the czar should withdraw his troops from Poland. The grand vizier, who well knew that the czar would never execute this treaty, made no scruple to sign it ; and the sultan, satisfied with having, in appearance, imposed laws on the Russians, remained still at Adrianople. Thus, in less than six months, was peace ratified with the czar, war declared, and peace renewed again.

The principal article of all these treaties was to oblige the king of Sweden to depart. The sultan, however, was not willing to endanger his own honour, and that of the Ottoman empire, by exposing the king to the risk of his being taken by his enemies on the road. It was stipulated that he should depart, but on condition that the ambassadors of Poland and Muscovy should be responsible for the safety of his person : these ambassadors accordingly swore in the name of their masters, that neither the czar nor the king of Poland should molest him on his journey ; and Charles was to engage, on his part, that he would not attempt to excite any commotions in Poland. The divan having thus settled the fate of Charles, Ismael, seraskier of Bender, repaired to Varnitza, where the king was encamped, to acquaint him with the resolutions of the Porte, insinuating to him with great address, that there was no longer time for delay, and that he must necessarily depart.

Charles made no other answer, than that the grand seignor had promised him an army and not a guard, and that kings ought to keep their word.

In the mean time, General Fleming, the minister and fa-

vourite of Augustus, maintained a secret correspondence with the kam of Tartary and the seraskier of Bender. La Mare, a French gentleman, a colonel in the service of Saxony, had made more than one journey from Bender to Dresden, and all these journeys were suspicious.

At this very time, the king of Sweden caused a courier, whom Fleming had sent to the Tartarian prince, to be arrested on the frontiers of Wallachia. The letters were brought to him, and deciphered, from whence it clearly appeared that a correspondence was carried on between the Tartars and the court of Dresden; but the letters were conceived in such ambiguous and general terms, that it was difficult to discover whether Augustus only intended to detach the Turks from the interest of Sweden, or whether he meant that the kam should deliver Charles to his Saxons as he conducted him back to Poland.

It seems hard to believe that a prince so generous as Augustus would, by seizing the person of the king of Sweden, endanger the lives of his ambassadors, and of three hundred Polish gentlemen, who were detained at Adrianople as pledges for Charles's safety.

But, on the other hand, it is well known, that Fleming, the absolute minister of Augustus, was a subtle man, and not very scrupulous. The outrages committed on the king elector by the king of Sweden might seem to render any revenge excusable; and it might be thought, that if the court of Dresden could buy Charles from the kam of Tartary, they would easily purchase the liberty of the Polish hostages at the Ottoman Porte.

All these reasons were discussed by the king, Mullern, his privy chancellor, and Grothusen, his favourite. They read the letters again and again; and, their unhappy situation making them more suspicious, they resolved to believe the worst.

A few days after, the king was confirmed in his suspicions by the precipitate departure of Count Sapieha, who had taken refuge with him, and now quitted him abruptly to go

to Poland to throw himself into the arms of Augustus. In any other situation he would have regarded Sapieha only as a malcontent; but in his present delicate condition he did not hesitate to believe him a traitor. The repeated importunities with which they now pressed him to depart, converted his suspicions into certainty. The obstinacy of his temper coinciding with these appearances, confirmed him in the opinion that they intended to betray him, and deliver him up to his enemies, though this plot hath never been fully proved.

He might deceive himself in supposing that Augustus had made a bargain with the Tartars for his person; but he was much more deceived in relying on the succours of the Ottoman court. Be that as it will, he resolved to gain time.

He told the pacha of Bender, that he could not depart without having money to pay his debts; for though his "thaim" had for a long time been restored to him, his liberality had always obliged him to borrow. The pacha asked him how much he wanted. The king replied, at a hazard, a thousand purses, amounting to fifteen hundred thousand livres of our money in the best coin. The pacha wrote to the Porte; and the sultan, in the room of a thousand purses which Charles had asked, sent twelve hundred, and wrote the pacha the following letter:

*Letter from the GRAND SEIGNOR to the PACHA of BENDER.*

"The purport of this imperial letter is, to acquaint you, that upon your representation and recommendation, and upon that of the most noble Delvet-Gherai-Kam to our Sublime Porte, our imperial munificence hath granted a thousand purses to the king of Sweden, which shall be sent to Bender, under the care and conduct of the most illustrious Mehemet Pacha, formerly chioux-pacha, to remain in your custody till the time of the departure of the king of Sweden, whose steps God direct, and then to be given to him, together with two hundred purses more, as an overplus of our imperial liberality, which exceeds his demands.



“With regard to the route of Poland which he is determined to take, you and the kam who are to accompany him, shall take such wise and prudent measures as may, during the whole journey, prevent, as well the troops under your command as the retinue of the king of Sweden, from committing any outrage, or being guilty of any action that may be reputed contrary to the peace which still subsists between our Sublime Porte and the kingdom and republic of Poland, to the end the king may pass as a friend under our protection.

“By doing this (which you must expressly recommend to him to do) he will receive on the part of the Poles every honour and respect due to his majesty; of which we have been assured by the ambassadors of King Augustus and the republic, who on this condition have even offered themselves, together with several other Polish nobles, if we required it, as hostages for the security of his passage.

“When the time which you, together with the most noble Delvet-Gherai, shall fix for the march shall arrive, you shall put yourselves at the head of your brave soldiers, among whom shall be the Tartars, having the kam at their head; and you shall then conduct the king of Sweden with his retinue.

“So may it please the only God, the Almighty, to direct your steps and theirs. The pacha of Aulos shall remain at Bender with a body of spahis and another of janissaries, to defend it in your absence; and in following our imperial orders and intentions in all these points and articles, you will render yourself worthy of the continuance of our imperial favour, as well as the praise and recompense due to all those who observe them.”

*Done at our imperial residence of Constantinople, the  
2d of the moon Cheval, 1214 of the Hegira.*

During the time they were waiting for this answer from the grand seignor, the king wrote to the Porte, complaining of the treachery of which he imagined the kam of Tartary

to be guilty; but all the passages were so well guarded, and besides, the minister was against him, that his letters never reached the sultan; nay, the vizier stopped M. des Alleurs from coming to Adrianople, where the Porte then was, for fear that minister, who was an agent of the king of Sweden, should endeavour to disconcert the plan which he had formed for obliging him to depart.

Charles, enraged to see himself thus hunted, as it were, from the grand seignor's dominions, determined not to quit them at all.

He might have desired to return through the territories of Germany, or to take shipping on the Black Sea, in order to sail to Marseilles by the Mediterranean; but he rather chose to ask nothing, and to wait the event.

When the twelve hundred purses were arrived, his treasurer Grothusen, who had learned the Turkish language during his long stay in the country, went to wait upon the pacha without an interpreter, with the design of drawing the money from him, and then to form some new intrigue at the Porte, being continually held up by the foolish supposition, that the Swedish party would at last be able to arm the Ottoman empire against the czar.

Grothusen told the pacha, that the king was not able to prepare his equipage without money. "But," said the pacha, "we shall settle all the expenses of your departure; your master has no occasion to be at any expense while he continues under the protection of mine."

Grothusen replied, that there was so much difference between the equipages of the Turks and those of the Franks, that they were obliged to have recourse to the artificers of Sweden and Poland, resident at Varnitza.

He assured him that his master was disposed to depart, and that this money would facilitate and hasten his departure. The pacha, too credulous, gave the twelve hundred purses! and attended the king in a few days after, in a most respectful manner, to receive his orders for his departure.

His surprise was inconceivable, when the king told him

he was not yet ready to go, and that he wanted a thousand purses more. The pacha, confounded at this answer, was some time before he could speak. He then retired to a window, where he was observed to shed some tears. At last, addressing himself to the king, "I shall lose my head," says he, "for having obliged your majesty: I have given you the twelve hundred purses against the express orders of my sovereign." Having said this, he withdrew, oppressed with grief.

As he was going, the king stopped him, and said, that he would excuse him to the sultan. "Ah!" replied the Turk, as he departed, "my master knows not how to excuse faults, he knows only to punish them."

Ismael Pacha carried this piece of news to the kam, who had received the same orders with the pacha, not to suffer the twelve hundred purses to be given to the king before his departure, and yet consented to the delivery of the money; he was as apprehensive as the pacha, of the indignation of the grand seignor. They both wrote to the Porte to justify themselves; protesting that they had given the twelve hundred purses upon the solemn promises of the king's minister that he would depart without delay; and beseeching his highness not to impute the king's refusal to their disobedience.

Charles still persisting in the idea, that the kam and pacha wanted to deliver him up to his enemies, ordered M. Funk, at that time his envoy at the Ottoman court, to lay his complaints against them before the sultan, and to ask a thousand purses more. His own great generosity, and the little account he made of money, hindered him from seeing the meanness of this proposal. He did it merely to have a refusal, and in order to have a fresh pretext for not departing. But it is to be reduced to strange extremities, to stand in need of such artifices. Savari, his interpreter, an artful and enterprising man, carried his letter to Adrianople in spite of the strictness which the grand vizier had used to guard the passes.



Funk was obliged to make this dangerous demand. All the answer he received was, to be thrown into prison. The sultan, enraged, convoked an extraordinary divan, and, what very seldom happens, spoke himself on the occasion. His speech, according to the translation then made of it, was as follows :

“I have scarce known the king of Sweden but by his defeat at Pultowa, and by the prayer he preferred to me, to grant him an asylum in my dominions. I have not, I believe, any need of him; nor any reason either to love or fear him : notwithstanding, without consulting any other motive than the hospitality of a Mussulman, and my own generosity, which sheds the dew of its favours upon the great as well as the small; upon strangers as well as my own subjects: I have received and succoured him with all things, himself, his ministers, officers, and soldiers, and have not ceased for these three years and a half to load him with presents.

“I have granted him a considerable guard to conduct him into his own kingdom. He asked a thousand purses to defray some expenses, though I pay all. Instead of a thousand, I granted him twelve hundred. After having got these out of the hands of the seraskier of Bender, he asks a thousand purses more, and refuses to depart, under a pretence that the guard is too small, whereas it is but too large to pass through the country of a friend.

“I ask, then, whether it be to violate the laws of hospitality, to send back this prince; and whether foreign powers ought to accuse me of violence and injustice, in case I should be obliged to compel him by force to depart.”

All the divan answered, that the grand seignor acted with justice. The mufti declared that hospitality from Musulmen toward infidels was not commanded, and much less toward the ungrateful; and he gave his fetfa, a kind of mandate, which generally accompanies the important orders of the grand seignor. These fetfas are revered as oracles;

though the very persons by whom they are given, are as much slaves to the sultan as any others.

The order and fetfa were carried to Bender by the Boyouk Imraour, grand master of the horse, and a chiaou pacha, first usher. The pacha of Bender received the order at the house of the kam of Tartary, from whence he immediately repaired to Varnitza, to ask the king whether he would depart as a friend, or reduce him to the necessity of putting the orders of the sultan in execution.

Charles, thus menaced, was not master of his passion. "Obey your master if you dare," said he, "and leave my presence." The pacha, fired with indignation, returned at full gallop, contrary to the usual custom of the Turks; and chancing to meet Fabricius in his way, he cried out to him, without checking his horse, "the king will not hear reason; you will see strange things presently." The same day he discontinued the supply of the king's provisions, and removed his guard of janissaries. He caused intimation to be given to all the Poles and Cossacks at Varnitza, that if they wished to have any provisions, they must quit the camp of the king of Sweden, and repair to Bender, and put themselves under the protection of the Porte. They all obeyed, and left the king without any other attendant than the officers of his household, and three hundred Swedish soldiers to make head against twenty thousand Tartars, and six thousand Turks.

There was now no provision in the camp, either for the men or their horses. The king ordered twenty of the fine Arabian horses which had been sent him by the grand seignor, to be shot without the camp, saying, "I will have none of their provisions nor their horses." This was an excellent regale to the Tartars, who, as is well known, think horse flesh delicious food. In the mean time, the Turks and Tartars invested the king's little camp on every side.

The king, without the least discomposure, made a regular intrenchment with his three hundred Swedes, in which work he himself assisted; his chancellor, his treasurer, his secre-

varies, his valets-de-chambre, and all his domestics, giving likewise their assistance. Some barricadoed the windows, and others fastened beams behind the doors, in the form of buttresses.

As soon as the house was sufficiently barricadoed, and the king had gone round his pretended fortifications, he sat down to chess with his favourite Grothusen with as much tranquillity as if every thing was in the greatest security. Happily M. Fabricius, the envoy of Holstein, did not lodge at Varnitza, but at a small village between Varnitza and Bender, where Mr. Jeffreys, the English envoy to the king of Sweden, likewise resided. These two ministers, seeing the storm ready to burst, took upon themselves the office of mediators between the Turks and the king. The kam, and especially the pacha of Bender, who had no mind to offer violence to the Swedish monarch, received with eagerness the offers of these two ministers. They had two conferences at Bender, in which they were assisted by the usher of the seraglio, and the grand master of the horse, who had brought the sultan's order, and the mufti's fetfa.

M. Fabricius\* declared to them, that his Swedish majesty had many cogent reasons to believe that they meant to deliver him up to his enemies in Poland. The kam, the pacha, and all the rest, swore by their heads, and called God to witness, that they detested so horrible a perfidy, and that they would shed the last drop of their blood, rather than suffer such disrespect to be shown to the king in Poland; adding, that they had in their hands the Russian and Polish ambassadors, who would answer with their lives for the least affront that should be offered to the king of Sweden. In fine, they complained bitterly that the king should conceive such injurious suspicions against people who had received him so politely, and treated him with so much humanity. Though oaths are frequently the language of perfidy, Fabricius suffered himself to be persuaded by the Turks: he

\*The whole of this account is related by M. Fabricius in his letters.



thought he could discern in their protestations that air of truth which falsehood can, at best, but imitate imperfectly. He knew perfectly well there had been a secret correspondence between the kam of Tartary and King Augustus ; but he was at last persuaded, that the only end of their negotiation was to oblige Charles XII. to quit the dominions of the grand seignor. Whether Fabricius deceived himself or not, he assured them that he would represent to the king the injustice of his suspicions. "But," adds he, "do you intend to compel him to depart?" "Yes," says the pacha, "such is the order of our master." He then entreated them to consider seriously whether that order implied that they should shed the blood of a crowned head. "Yes," replies the kam, in a passion, "if that crowned head disobeys the grand seignor in his dominions."

In the mean time, every thing being ready for the assault, the death of Charles XII. seemed inevitable ; but the order of the sultan not expressly saying whether they were to kill him in case of resistance, the pacha prevailed on the kam to let him despatch an express to Adrianople, where the grand seignor then resided, to receive the last orders of his highness.

M. Jeffreys and M. Fabricius, having procured this short respite, hastened to acquaint the king with it : they arrived with all the eagerness of people who bring good news ; but were received very coldly : he called them officious mediators, and still persisted in his opinion, that the order of the sultan, and the fetfa of the mufti, were both forged, inasmuch as they had sent to the Porte for fresh orders.

The English minister retired, firmly resolved to interfere no more in the affairs of so inflexible a prince. M. Fabricius, beloved by the king, and more accustomed to his humour than the English minister, remained with him, to conjure him not to hazard so precious a life on such an unnecessary occasion.

The king, for answer, showed him his fortifications ; and begged he would employ his mediation only to procure him

some provisions. The Turks were easily prevailed upon to allow provisions to be conveyed to the king's camp until the return of the courier from Adrianople. The kam himself had strictly enjoined his Tartars, who were eager for pillage, not to make any attempt against the Swedes till the arrival of fresh orders ; so that Charles went sometimes out of his camp with forty horse, and rode through the midst of the Tartars ; who, with great respect, left him a free passage ; he would even ride up in front of their lines, which they opened rather than resist him.

At last the order of the grand seignor being come, to put to the sword all the Swedes who should make the least resistance, and not even to spare the life of the king, the pacha had the complaisance to show the order to M. Fabricius, to the end that he might make his last effort to turn the obstinacy of Charles. Fabricius went immediately to acquaint him with these sad tidings. "Have you seen the order you speak of?" said the king. "Yes," replied Fabricius. "Well, then, go tell them, in my name, that this second order is another forgery, and that I will not depart." Fabricius threw himself at his feet, fell into a passion, and reproached him with his obstinacy, but all to no purpose. "Return to your Turks," said the king to him, smiling ; "if they attack me, I shall know how to defend myself."

The king's chaplains likewise threw themselves on their knees before him, conjuring him not to expose to certain death the unhappy remains of Pultowa, and especially his own sacred person ; assuring him that resistance in such a case was altogether unjustifiable ; and that it was a direct violation of all the laws of hospitality, to resolve to continue against their will with strangers who had so long and so generously supported him. The king, though he had not been angry with Fabricius, fell into a passion with his priests, and told them that he had taken them to pray for him, and not to give him advice.

The Generals Hord and Dardoff, whose sentiments had always been against hazarding a battle which could not fail

of proving unsuccessful, showed the king their breasts covered with wounds which they had received in his service, and assured him that they were ready to lay down their lives for him; but begged that it might be, at least, upon a more necessary occasion. "I know, by your wounds and my own," says Charles to them, "that we have fought valiantly together. You have done your duty hitherto; do it to-day likewise." Nothing now remained but to obey. Every one was ashamed not to court death with their king. This prince, being now prepared for the assault, flattered himself in secret that he should have the honour of sustaining, with three hundred Swedes, the efforts of a whole army. He assigned to every man his post: his chancellor, Mullern, and the secretary, Empreus, and his clerks, were to defend the chancery-house; Baron Fief, at the head of the officers of the kitchen, were stationed at another post; the grooms of the stable and the cooks had another place to guard; for with him every one was a soldier: he then rode from the intrenchments to his house, promising rewards to every one, creating officers, and assuring them that he would make captains of the very meanest of his servants who should fight with courage.

It was not long before they beheld the army of the Turks and Tartars advancing to attack this little intrenchment with ten pieces of cannon and two mortars. The horses' tails waved in the air; the clarions sounded; the cries of "Alla, Alla," were heard on every side. Baron Grothusen remarked, that the Turks did not mix in their cries any injurious reflections against the king, but that they only called him, "Demirbash," (head of iron.) He, therefore, instantly resolved to go out of the camp alone and unarmed; and accordingly advanced to the lines of the janissaries, most of whom had received money from him. "What, my friends," says he to them in their own language, "are you come to massacre three hundred Swedes who are defenceless? You, brave janissaries, who have pardoned fifty thousand Russians upon their crying *amman*, (pardon,) have



you forgot the many favours you have received from us? and would you assassinate this great king of Sweden whom you love, and whose liberality you have so often experienced? My friends, he desires but three days, and the orders of the sultan are not so strict as you are taught to believe."

These words produced an effect which Grothusen himself could not have expected. The janissaries swore by their beards that they would not attack the king, but would give him the three days he demanded. In vain the signal for assault was given; the janissaries, so far from obeying, threatened to fall upon their commander, if the three days were not granted to the king of Sweden. They then went to the pacha of Bender's tent, crying out that the sultan's orders were forged.

To this unexpected sedition, the pacha had nothing to oppose but patience. He affected a satisfaction at the generous resolution of the janissaries, and ordered them to return to Bender. The kam of Tartary being an impetuous man, would have given the assault immediately with his own troops; but the pacha, who was not willing that the Tartars should have all the honour of taking the king, while he himself, perhaps, might be punished for the disobedience of the janissaries, persuaded the kam to wait till the next day.

The pacha, on his return to Bender, assembled all the officers of the janissaries, and the oldest soldiers, to whom he read, and also showed them the positive order of the sultan, together with the mufti's fetfa. Sixty of the oldest, with venerable white beards, who had received a thousand presents from the hands of the king of Sweden, proposed to go to him in person, to intreat him to put himself into their hands, and to permit them to serve him as guards.

The pacha agreed to it, as there was no expedient he would not have adopted, rather than have been reduced to the necessity of killing this prince. These sixty old veterans accordingly repaired the next morning to Varnitza, ha-

ving nothing in their hands but long white rods, the only arms of the janissaries when they are not at war; for the Turks regard as a barbarous custom the christian manner of wearing swords in time of peace, and going armed into the houses of their friends, and the churches.

They addressed themselves to Baron Grothusen and Chancellor Mullern : they told them that they came to serve faithful guards to the king; and that if he pleased, they would conduct him to Adrianople, where he might himself speak to the grand seignor. At the time they were making this proposal, the king was reading letters which were brought from Constantinople, and which Fabricius, who could no longer attended him in person, had sent him secretly by a janissary. They were from Count Poniatowsky, who could neither serve him at Bender nor Adrianople, being detained at Constantinople by order of the Porte, from the time of his making the imprudent demand of the thousand purses. He informed the king, "that the orders of the sultan to seize or massacre his royal person, in case of resistance, were but too true; that indeed the sultan was deceived by his ministers; but that the more he was imposed upon, he would for that very reason be the more faithfully obeyed; that he must submit to the times, and yield to necessity; that he took the liberty to advise him to try every expedient with the ministers by way of negotiations; not to be inflexible in a matter which required the gentlest management; and to expect from time and good policy, a remedy for that evil, which, by violent measures, would be only rendered incurable."

But neither the proposals of the old janissaries, nor the letters of Poniatowsky, could give the king even an idea that he could yield without incurring dishonour. He chose rather to perish by the hands of the Turks, than to be in any respect their prisoner; he therefore dismissed the janissaries without deigning to see them, and sent them word, that if they did not immediately depart, he would cut off their beards; which, in the eastern countries, is esteemed the most outrageous of all affronts.

The old men, filled with the most lively indignation, returned home, crying out as they went, "Ah, this head of iron! since he will perish, let him perish." They went and gave the pacha an account of their commission, and informed their comrades at Bender of the strange reception they had met with. Every one then swore to obey the pacha's orders without delay, and were as impatient to begin the assault as they had been backward the day before.

The word of command was immediately given; the Turks marched up to the intrenchments; the Tartars were already waiting for them, and the cannon began to play. The janissaries on the one side, and the Tartars on the other, in an instant forced the little camp: hardly twenty Swedes drew their swords; the whole three hundred were surrounded and made prisoners without resistance. The king was then on horseback, between his house and his camp, with the Generals Hord, Dardoff, and Sparre; and seeing that all his soldiers were taken prisoners before his eyes, he said, with great composure, to these three officers, "come, let us go and defend the house. We will fight," adds he with a smile, "*pro aris and focis*."

Accordingly, he galloped with them up to the house, in which he had placed about forty domestics as sentinels, and which he had fortified in the best manner he was able.

These generals, accustomed as they were to the dauntless intrepidity of their master, were surprised to see him resolve in cold blood, and even with an air of pleasantry, to defend himself against ten pieces of cannon and a whole army; they followed him with some guards and domestics, making in all about twenty persons.

When they came to the door, they found it besieged by the janissaries; two hundred Turks and Tartars had already entered by a window, and had made themselves masters of all the apartments, except a large hall, into which the king's domestics had retired. This hall was happily near the door at which the king designed to enter with his little troop of



twenty persons; he threw himself off his horse with pistol and sword in hand, and his followers did the same.

The janissaries fell upon him on all sides: they were animated by the promise which the pacha had made, of eight ducats of gold to every one who should only touch his clothes in case they could take him. He wounded and killed whoever approached his person. A janissary whom he had wounded, clapped his carbine to his face, and had not his arm been pushed aside by the motion of the crowd, which moved backwards and forwards like a wave, the king had certainly been killed. The ball grazed upon his nose, and carried away with it the tip of his ear, and then broke the arm of General Hord, whose destiny it was to be always wounded by the side of his master.

The king plunged his sword in the janissary's breast; at the same time his domestics, who were shut up in the great hall, opened the door; the king entered like an arrow, followed by his little troop; they instantly shut the door, and barricadoed it with whatever they could find. In this manner was Charles XII. shut up in a hall with all his attendants, consisting of about sixty men, officers, guards, secretaries, valets-de-chambre, and domestics of every kind.

The janissaries and Tartars pillaged the rest of the house, and filled the apartments. "Come," says the king, "let us go and drive these barbarians out of my house:" and putting himself at the head of his men, he, with his own hands, opened the door of the hall that led to his bed-chamber, rushed into the room, and fired upon those who were plundering.

The Turks, loaded with spoil, and terrified at the sudden appearance of the king, whom they had been accustomed to respect, threw down their arms, leaped out of the window, or retired to the cellars: the king taking advantage of their confusion, and his own men being animated with success, they pursued the Turks from chamber to chamber, killing or wounding those who had not made their escape; and in a quarter of an hour cleared the house of their enemies.

In the heat of the fight, the king perceived two janissaries who had hid themselves under his bed : one of them he killed with his sword ; the other asked for mercy, by crying " amman." " I give thee thy life," said the king to him, " on condition that you go and give to the pacha a faithful account of what you have seen." The Turk readily promised to do this, and was allowed to leap out at the window like the rest.

The Swedes being at last masters of the house, again shut and barricadoed the windows. They were not in want of arms, a ground room full of muskets and powder having escaped the tumultuary search of the janissaries. These they employed to good service ; they fired through the windows almost close upon the Turks, of whom, in less than half a quarter of an hour, they killed two hundred.

The cannon still played upon the house ; yet, as the stones were very soft, they only made some holes, but demolished nothing.

The kam of Tartary and the pacha, who were desirous of taking the king alive, and being ashamed to lose so many men, and to employ a whole army against sixty persons, thought it advisable to set fire to the house, in order to oblige the king to surrender. They caused some arrows, twisted about with lighted matches, to be shot upon the roof, and against the doors and windows, and the house was in flames in a moment. The roof all on fire, was ready to tumble upon the Swedes. The king, with great calmness, gave orders to extinguish the fire : finding a little barrel of liquor, he took it up himself, and, assisted by two Swedes, threw it upon the place where the fire was most violent. It happened that the barrel was filled with brandy ; but the hurry inseparable from such a scene of confusion, hindered them from thinking of it in time. The fire now raged with double fury ; the king's apartment was entirely consumed ; the great hall where the Swedes were was filled with a terrible smoke, mixed with sheets of flame, which entered in at the doors of the neighbouring apartments ; one half of the roof had sunk

within the house, and the other fell on the outside, cracking amidst the flames.

In this extremity, a guard called Walberg ventured to cry out, that it was necessary to surrender. "There is a strange man," said the king, "to imagine that it is not more glorious to be burnt than taken prisoner!" Another sentinel, named Rosen, had the presence of mind to observe, that the chancery-house, which was but fifty paces distant, had a stone roof, and was proof against fire; that they ought to sally forth, take possession of that house, and then defend themselves. "There is a true Swede for you," cried the king, embracing the sentinel, and made him a colonel upon the spot. "Come on, my friends," says he, "take as much powder and ball with you as you can, and let us take possession of the chancery sword in hand."

The Turks, who all the while surrounded the house, saw with admiration, mixed with terror, the Swedes continue in the house all in flames; but their astonishment was still greater, when they saw the door open, and the king and his followers rushing out upon them like so many madmen. Charles and his principal officers were armed with swords and pistols: every man fired two pistols at once, as soon as the doors were opened; and, in the twinkling of an eye, throwing away their pistols and drawing their swords, they made the Turks recoil above fifty paces. But in a moment after, this little troop was surrounded; the king, who was booted, according to his usual custom, entangled himself with his spurs, and fell; one-and-twenty janissaries at once sprung upon him; he immediately threw up his sword into the air, to save himself the mortification of surrendering it. The Turks carried him to the quarters of the pacha, some taking hold of his legs, and others of his arms, in the same manner as sick persons are carried to prevent their being hurt.

The moment the king found himself taken prisoner, the violence of his temper, and the fury which such a long and desperate fight must have naturally inspired, gave place at once to a mild and gentle behaviour. He dropped not a



word of impatience, nor was an angry look to be seen in his face. He regarded the janissaries with a smiling countenance; and they carried him off, crying "Alla," with an indignation mixed at the same time with respect. His officers were taken at the same time, and stripped by the Turks and Tartars. It was on the 12th of February, 1713, that this strange event happened, which was followed with very singular consequences.\*

\* M. Norberg, who was not present at this event, hath in this particular part of his history only copied the account from M. de Voltaire; but he has mangled it, he has suppressed several interesting circumstances, and has not been able to justify the temerity of Charles XII. All that he has been able to say against M. de Voltaire, with regard to the affair of Bender, is reducible to the adventure of the Sieur Fredericus, valet-de-chambre to the king of Sweden, who some pretended was burnt in the king's house, and who, according to others, was cut in two by the Tartars. La Mottray alleges likewise, that the king of Sweden did not use the words "we will fight pro aris and focis:" but M. Fabricius, who was present, affirms, that the king did pronounce these words, that La Mottray was not near enough to hear them, and that if he had, he was not capable of comprehending their meaning, as he did not understand a word of Latin.

## BOOK VII.

**ARGUMENT.**—The Turks convey Charles to Demirtash.—King Stanislaus taken thither at the same time.—The bold action of M. de Vilhelongue.—Revolutions in the seraglio.—Battle in Pomerania.—Altena burnt by the Swedes.—Charles sets out on his return to his own dominions.—His strange manner of travelling.—His arrival at Stralsund.—His misfortunes.—Successes of Peter the Great.—His triumphant entry into Petersburg.

THE pacha of Bender waited in his tent with great solemnity the arrival of Charles, attended by one Marco, an interpreter. He received that prince with the most profound respect, and entreated him to repose himself on a sofa : but the king, not regarding the Turk's civilities, continued standing.

“Blessed be the Almighty,” said the pacha, “that your majesty is alive ; my despair is bitter at having been obliged, by your majesty, to execute the orders of his highness.” The king, only vexed that his three hundred soldiers suffered themselves to be taken in their intrenchments, replied, “Ah ! had my soldiers defended themselves as they ought, you would not have forced our camp in ten days.” “Alas,” cried the Turk, “that so much courage should be so ill employed !” He ordered the king to be conducted back to Bender on a horse richly caparisoned. His Swedes were all either killed or taken prisoners ; Charles's equipage, furniture, papers, and most necessary utensils, were either plundered or burnt ; and Swedish officers were to be seen on the public roads, almost naked, and chained two and two, following on foot the Tartars or janissaries. The chancellor and the general officers had no other destiny ; they were made the slaves of the soldiers to whose share they had fallen.

Ismael Pacha having conducted Charles to his seraglio at Bender, gave up to him his own apartment, and ordered him to be served like a king, but not without taking the precaution to place janissaries as sentinels at the chamber-door. A bed was also prepared for him; but he threw himself down upon a sofa, booted as he was, and fell fast asleep. An officer that stood near him in waiting covered his head with his cap; but the king, upon awaking from his first sleep, threw it off; and the Turk beheld with astonishment a sovereign sleeping in his boots, and bareheaded. The next morning, Ismael introduced Fabricius into the king's chamber. Fabricius found his majesty with his clothes torn, his boots, his hands, and his whole body covered with blood and powder, and his eye-brows burnt, yet maintaining a serene countenance even in this condition. He threw himself upon his knees before him, without being able to utter a word; but soon recovering from his surprise by the free and easy manner in which the king addressed him, he resumed his usual familiarity, and they began to talk of the battle of Bender with much pleasantry. "They say," said Fabricius, "that your majesty killed twenty janissaries with your own hand." "Well, well," replied the king, "a story always gains one half by report." In the midst of this conversation, the pacha presented to the king his favourite Grothusen, and Colonel Ribbins, whom he had had the generosity to redeem at his own expense. Fabricius undertook to ransom the other prisoners.

Jeffreys, the envoy of England, joined with him to procure the money to defray the expense. A Frenchman, who had come to Bender out of curiosity, and who had wrote a short account of these transactions, gave all that he had. These strangers, assisted by the interest, and even by the money of the pacha, redeemed not only the officers, but also their clothes, from the hands of the Turks and Tartars.

Next day the king was conducted, as a prisoner, in a chariot covered with scarlet, towards Adrianople: his treasurer, Grothusen, was with him; Chancellor Mullern and several



officers followed in another carriage; several were on horse-back; and when they cast their eyes on the chariot in which the king was, they could not refrain from tears. The pacha was at the head of the escort. Fabricius represented to him, that it was shameful the king should want a sword, and begged he would give him one. "God forbid!" said the pacha, "he would cut our beards for us if he had one." However, in a few hours after he gave him one.

As they were thus conducting this king, disarmed and a prisoner, who but a few years before had given law to so many states, and had seen himself the arbiter of the north and the terror of Europe, there appeared in the same place another example of the frailty of human grandeur. King Stanislaus had been seized in the Turkish dominions, and they were now carrying him to Bender, at the very time that they were carrying Charles from it.

Stanislaus being no longer supported by the hand which had made him king, and finding himself without money, and consequently without interest in Poland, had retired, at first, into Pomerania; and not being able to preserve his own kingdom, he had done every thing, as far as was in his power, to defend the dominions of his benefactor. He had even gone to Sweden, in order to hasten the reinforcements that were so much wanting in Livonia and Pomerania; in short, he had done every thing that could be expected from the friend of Charles XII. At this time, the first king of Prussia, a very prudent prince, being justly apprehensive of the too near neighbourhood of the Muscovites, thought of entering into a league with Augustus and the republic of Poland, in order to send back the Russians to their own country, and of engaging Charles XII. himself in this project. Three great events were to be produced by this plan; the peace of the north, the return of Charles to his own dominions, and the establishment of a strong barrier against the Russians, already become formidable to Europe. The preliminary article of this treaty, upon which the public tranquillity depended, was the abdication of Stanislaus; who not only ac

cepted the proposal, but even charged himself with being the negotiator of a peace which deprived him of his crown. Necessity, the public welfare, the glory of the sacrifice, and the interest of Charles, to whom he owed every thing, and whom he loved, decided him. He wrote to Bender; explained to the king of Sweden the situation of his affairs, their misfortunes, and their remedy; and conjured him not to oppose an abdication become necessary from the course of events, and honourable from its motives; he also entreated him not to sacrifice the interests of Sweden to those of an unhappy friend, who sacrificed himself, without repining, to the public good. Charles received these letters at Varnitza, and said to the courier in a passion, in presence of several witnesses, "If my friend will not be a king, I shall be able to make one of another person."

Stanislaus was obstinately bent on the sacrifice which Charles opposed. The times seem as if they were destined by Providence to produce strange sentiments, and still more extraordinary actions. Stanislaus resolved to go himself and prevail on Charles, though he ran a greater risk in abdicating the throne than ever he had done in obtaining it. One evening, about six o'clock, he stole from the Swedish army, which he commanded in Pomerania, and set out, accompanied by Baron Sparr, who hath since been an ambassador in England and France, and another colonel. He assumed the name of a Frenchman, called Haran, then a major in the Swedish army, and who lately died commander of Dantzic. He passed close by the whole army of the enemy; was sometimes stopped, and as often released by virtue of a passport which he had in the name of Haran; and, at last, after many perils and dangers, arrived on the frontiers of Turkey.

When he had reached Moldavia, he sent back Baron Sparr to his army, and entered Yassy, the capital of Moldavia, thinking himself safe in a country where the king of Sweden had been treated so respectfully; he was far from suspecting what was then passing.

He was asked who he was; to which he answered, that he was a major of a regiment in the service of Charles XII. At the very mention of the name, he was seized, and carried before the hospodar of Moldavia, who, having already learned from the gazettes, that Stanislaus had privately withdrawn from his army, conceived some suspicions of the truth.

The king's countenance had been described to him, which was very easily distinguished by its fullness, as well as its agreeableness, and an air of sweetness which he possessed to an uncommon degree.

The hospodar interrupted him, put to him a great many captious questions, and at last asked him what commission he held in the Swedish army. Stanislaus and the hospodar carried on their conversation in Latin. "*Major sum,*" said Stanislaus. "*Imo Maximus es,*" replied the Moldavian; and immediately presented him with a chair of state. He treated him as a king, but yet like a king who was a prisoner, and he placed a strict guard about a Greek convent, in which he was obliged to remain till they received the sultan's orders. The orders were to conduct him to Bender, from which place Charles XII. had been just removed.

The news of this event was brought to the pacha at the time he was accompanying the king of Sweden's carriage. The pacha immediately acquainted Fabricius with it, who, approaching Charles's chariot, told him he was not the only king that was a prisoner in the hands of the Turks, for that Stanislaus was but a few miles off, under a guard of soldiers. "Run to him, my dear Fabricius," said Charles, without being disconcerted at the accident; "tell him never to make peace with Augustus, and assure him that in a little time our affairs will change." So inflexible was Charles in his own opinions, that, abandoned as he was in Poland, attacked in his own dominions, a captive in a Turkish litter, and led a prisoner without knowing whither they were carrying him, he still counted on fortune, and still expected to have a hundred thousand men from the Ottoman Porte. Fabricius hastened to execute his commission, attended by a janissary;



having obtained permission from the pacha. At a few miles distance he met the body of soldiers that conducted Stanislaus; he addressed himself to a cavalier that rode in the midst of them, clad in a French dress, and but indifferently mounted, and asked him in the German tongue where the king of Poland was. The person to whom he spoke was Stanislaus himself, whom he did not recollect under this disguise. "What!" said the king, "do you no longer remember me?" Fabricius then represented to him the wretched state in which the king of Sweden was, and his unalterable but useless obstinacy in his designs.

As Stanislaus approached Bender, the pacha, who was upon his return, after having accompanied Charles several miles, sent the king of Poland an Arabian horse, with a magnificent harness.

He was received at Bender amidst a discharge of the artillery; and excepting his liberty, of which he was at first deprived, he had no cause to complain of the treatment he met with.\* In the mean time, Charles was conducted to Adrianople. That town was already filled with the account of his late battle. The Turks condemned and admired him at the same time; but the divan, exasperated, already threatened to confine him in one of the islands of the Archipelago.

Stanislaus, king of Poland, who did me the honour to inform me of the greatest part of these particulars, assured me also, that it was proposed in the divan to confine him likewise in one of the islands of Greece; but a few months after, the grand seignor, being mollified, permitted him to depart.

M. des Alleurs, who could have taken his part, and could have prevented them from offering such an affront to every christian king, was at Constantinople; as was also M. Po-

\* The good Chaplain Norberg alleges, that this is a contradiction, saying, that King Stanislaus was at once detained a prisoner, and treated as king at Bender. How! had not this poor man discernment enough to perceive, that it is possible for a man to be a prisoner, and yet loaded with honours at the same time?

niatowsky, whose fertile and enterprising genius they had ever dreaded. The greatest part of the Swedes at Adrianople were in prison; and the sultan's throne seemed to be inaccessible on all sides to the complaints of the king of Sweden.

The Marquis de Fierville, who had resided with Charles at Bender as a private agent of France, was at that time at Adrianople. He dared to form the design of rendering that prince a service, at a time when he was abandoned or oppressed by every one. He was happily seconded in his design by a French gentleman, of an ancient house in Champagne, called Villelongue, a man of intrepidity, who, not having at that time a fortune equal to his courage, and besides dazzled with the reputation of the king of Sweden, had come to Turkey with a view of entering into the service of that prince.

M. de Fierville, with the assistance of this young man, wrote a memorial in the name of the king of Sweden, in which he made that monarch demand satisfaction of the sultan for the insult offered in his person to all crowned heads, and for the treachery, real or supposed, of the kam and pacha of Bender.

In this memorial, he accused the vizier and other ministers of having been corrupted by the Russians, of imposing upon the grand seignor, of having intercepted the king's letters to his highness, and of having by their artifices extorted from the sultan an order so contrary to the hospitality of Mussulmen, by which the law of nations was violated, and in a manner so unworthy of a great emperor, attacking with twenty thousand men, a king who had none but his own domestics to defend him, and who relied upon the sacred word of the sultan.

When this memorial was drawn up, it was necessary to have it translated into the Turkish language, and written in a particular hand, upon a paper made on purpose, which it is necessary to make use of for every thing which is presented to the sultan.

They applied to several French interpreters in the town; but the affairs of the king of Sweden were so desperate, and the vizier declared so openly against him, that not a single interpreter dared even to translate it. At last they found a stranger, whose hand was not known at the Porte, who, having received a handsome recompense, and the assurance of profound secrecy, translated the memorial into the Turkish language, and wrote it upon the proper sort of paper. Baron d'Advirson, a Swedish officer, counterfeited the king's signature. Fierville, who had the royal signet, set it to the writing; and they sealed the whole with the arms of Sweden. Villelongue charged himself with the delivery of this packet into the hands of the grand seignor as he went to the mosque, according to his usual custom. The like methods had been frequently employed to present memorials to the sultan against his ministers; but that very circumstance rendered the success of this enterprise the more difficult, and the danger still greater.

The vizier, who foresaw that the Swedes would demand justice of the sultan, and being instructed by the unhappy fate of his predecessors, had given peremptory orders to allow no one to approach the grand seignor's person, but to seize every one who should be about the mosque with petitions in their hands.

Villelongue knew of this order, and was not ignorant that he run the risk of losing his head. He laid aside his Frank's dress, and put on a Grecian habit; and, concealing the letter in his bosom, repaired betimes to the neighbourhood of the mosque to which the grand seignor resorted. He counterfeited the madman, and dancing between two files of janissaries, through which the sultan was to pass, he purposely let drop some pieces of money from his pockets, as if by chance, in order to amuse the guards.

When the sultan approached, the guards endeavoured to remove Villelongue; but he fell on his knees and struggled with the janissaries; at last his cap fell off, and he was discovered by his long hair to be a Frank: he received several



blows, and was very roughly handled. The grand seignor, who was near, heard the scuffle, and demanded the cause of it. Villelongue cried out with all his force, "*Amman ! Amman !* Mercy !" pulling the letter out of his bosom. The sultan ordered the guards to let him approach. Villelongue instantly ran to him, embraced his stirrup, and presented the memorial, saying, "*Sued crall dan ;* It is the king of Sweden who gives you this." The sultan put the letter in his bosom, and proceeded to the mosque. In the mean while they secured Villelongue, and imprisoned him in one of the exterior apartments of the seraglio.

The sultan having read the letter, upon his leaving the mosque, resolved to interrogate the prisoner himself. What I relate here will perhaps appear somewhat incredible ; but yet nothing is here advanced but what is vouched by the letters of M. de Villelongue, and when so brave an officer asserts any thing upon his honour, he merits some credit. He assured me, then, that the sultan laid aside his imperial garb, and the particular turban which he wears, and disguised himself like an officer of the janissaries, a thing which he frequently does. He brought along with him an old man of the island of Malta, who served as an interpreter. By favour of this disguise, Villelongue enjoyed an honour which no Christian ambassador had ever obtained ; he had a private conference with the Turkish emperor for a quarter of an hour. He did not fail to represent the wrongs which the king of Sweden had suffered, to accuse the ministers, and to demand satisfaction, with so much the more freedom, as in talking to the sultan he was only supposed to be talking to his equal. He could easily discover, notwithstanding the darkness of his prison, that it was no other than the grand seignor himself ; but this only served to give him the more spirit in the conversation. The pretended officer of the janissaries said to Villelongue, "Christian, assure thyself that the sultan, my master, has the soul of an emperor ; and that if your king of Sweden has reason on his side, he will do him justice." Villelongue was soon

after set at liberty; and in a few weeks after a sudden change was seen in the seraglio, which the Swedes attributed to this singular conference. The mufti was deposed; the kam of Tartary was banished to Rhodes; and the seraskier pacha of Bender confined in one of the islands of the Archipelago.

The Ottoman Porte is so subject to the like revolutions, that it is difficult to decide whether the sultan really meant by these sacrifices to appease the king of Sweden or not. Indeed, from the treatment which that prince received, it does not appear that the Porte had any great inclination to oblige him.

The favourite Ali-Coumourgi was suspected of being the sole cause of all these changes, in order to serve his own particular views. It was said that he caused the kam of Tartary and the seraskier of Bender to be banished, under the pretence that they had given the king the twelve hundred purses in contradiction to the orders of the grand seignor. He likewise raised to the throne of Tartary the brother of the deposed kam, a young man of his own age, who had little regard for his brother, and upon whom the favourite depended greatly in prosecuting the wars he had meditated. With regard to the grand vizier Jussuf, he was not deposed till some weeks after, when Soliman Pacha obtained the title of first vizier.

It is incumbent on me to declare, that M. de Villelongue and several Swedes assured me, that the letter presented to the sultan in the king's name, was the cause of all these great changes at the Porte; but M. de Fierville, for his part, has assured me of the contrary. But, indeed, I have found the like contradictions in many memorials that have been submitted to my perusal. In such cases, it is the duty of a historian to give matters of fact ingenuously, without endeavouring to dive into motives; and to confine himself to the relation of what he does know, without guessing at things which he is not acquainted with.

In the mean time they had conducted Charles XII. to the

little castle of Demirtash, near Adrianople. An innumerable number of Turks were assembled in this place to see the arrival of that prince, whom they carried from his chariot to the castle on a sofa; but Charles, that he might not be seen by the crowd, put a cushion upon his head.

The Porte was several days before it would grant him his request to reside at Demotica, a little town six leagues from Adrianople, and near the famous river Hebrus, now called Marizza. "Go," said Coumourgi to the grand vizier Soliman, "and tell the king of Sweden that he may stay at Demotica all his life; I will be answerable, that before the expiration of one year, he will demand of his own accord to be gone; but let your chief care be, not to furnish him with money."

Thus was the king conveyed to the little town of Demotica, where the Porte allowed him a "thaim," consisting of a considerable quantity of provisions for himself and his retinue; but they would only grant him five-and-twenty crowns a day in money to buy pork and wine, two kinds of provisions which the Turks never furnish to others. The purse of five hundred crowns a day, which he had at Bender, was withdrawn.

Scarcely had he arrived at Demotica with his little court, when the grand vizier Soliman was deposed, and his place filled by Ibrahim Molla, a man of a high spirit, of great courage, but the coarsest manners. It is not useless to make known his history, that the reader may be acquainted with the characters of all those viceroys of the Ottoman empire, upon whom the fortune of Charles so long depended.

He had been a common sailor till the accession of the sultan Achmet III. This emperor frequently disguised himself, either in the habit of a private man, of a priest, or a dervise; and used to slip in the evening into the coffee-houses of Constantinople, and the public places, to hear what was said of him, and to collect the sentiments of the people. One day he heard this Molla complaining that the Turkish ships never took any prizes, and swearing, that if



he were a captain of a ship, he would never enter the port of Constantinople without bringing some vessel of the infidels along with him. The grand seignor the next day ordered the command of a ship to be given to him, and that he should be sent upon a cruize. The new captain returned in a few days after with a Maltese bark, and a galley of Genoa. In about two years time he was appointed captain general of the navy, and at last grand vizier. As soon as he arrived at this post, he thought he could dispense with the favourite; and to render himself the more necessary, he projected a scheme for commencing a war against the Russians: with this view, he pitched a tent not far from the place where the king of Sweden resided.

He invited that prince to come and see him, with the new kam of Tartary, and the French ambassador. The king, who became more proud as he became more unfortunate, considered it a most daring affront, for a subject to send him an invitation; he therefore ordered his Chancellor Mullern to go in his place; and he himself, who was always in the extremes, lest the Turks should not pay him that respect which was due to his royal person, or oblige him to compromise his dignity, took to his bed, and resolved not to quit it as long as he should stay at Demotica. He remained ten months in his bed, pretending to be ill. Chancellor Mullern, Grothusen, and Colonel Dubens, were the only persons who were admitted to his table. They had none of the conveniences with which the Franks are generally provided; all these they had lost at Bender; consequently, their meals were far from being served with pomp or with elegance. They waited on themselves; and during the whole time Chancellor Mullern performed the office of cook.

During the time that Charles was thus passing his time in bed, he was apprized of the desolation of all his provinces that were situated within the limits of Sweden.

General Steinbock, rendered illustrious by his driving the Danes out of Scania, and having conquered their choicest troops with a handful of peasants, still maintained for some

time the reputation of the Swedish arms. He defended, as far as he was able, Pomerania, Bremen, and what the king still possessed in Germany; but could not hinder the combined armies of the Danes and Saxons from besieging Stade, a town of great strength and importance, situated on the banks of the Elbe, in the duchy of Bremen. The town was bombarded and reduced to ashes, and the garrison obliged to surrender at discretion, before Steinbock was able to advance to their assistance.

This general, who had about twelve thousand men, of which one half were cavalry, pursued the enemy, who were twice as numerous, and, at last, overtook them in the duchy of Mecklenburg, at a place called Gadebush, near a river which bears the same name. He arrived opposite to the Saxons and the Danes on the 20th of December, 1712. He was separated from them by a morass. The enemy had this morass in front, and a wood in their rear; they had also the advantage of number and situation; and their camp could not be gained without crossing the marsh under the fire of their artillery.

Steinbock passed at the head of his troops, arrived in order of battle, and began one of the most obstinate and bloody engagements which ever happened between these rival nations. After a sharp conflict for three hours, the Danes and Saxons were routed, and obliged to quit the field of battle.

It was in this battle that a son of Augustus by the countess of Konigsmark, known by the name of Count Saxe, served his apprenticeship in the art of war. This is the same Count Saxe who had the honour afterwards to be elected duke of Courland, and who wanted nothing but power to put himself in possession of the most incontestible right which any man can have to sovereignty, I mean the unanimous vote of the people. This is also the man who has since acquired a more solid glory by saving France at the battle of Fontenoy, by conquering Flanders, and meriting the reputation of the greatest general of our age. He

commanded a regiment at Gadebush, and had a horse killed under him ; I have heard him say, that the Swedes always kept their ranks ; and that, even after the victory was decided, and the first lines of these brave troops having their enemies lying dead at their feet, there was not a single Swedish soldier who dared even to stop to strip them, before prayers were read in the field of battle ; so steady were they in the strict discipline to which their king had always accustomed them.

Steinbock, after this victory, remembering that the Danes had reduced Stade to ashes, went to retaliate on Altena, which belongs to the king of Denmark. Altena stands below Hamburgh, on the banks of the Elbe, which can convey ships of considerable burthen into its harbour. The king of Denmark had favoured this town with many privileges, with the design of establishing a flourishing commerce ; the industry of its inhabitants, encouraged by the prudent measures of the king, had already added Altena to the number of rich and commercial cities. Hamburgh had conceived a jealousy at this, and wished for nothing so much as its destruction. As soon as Steinbock was in sight of Altena, he sent a trumpet to acquaint the inhabitants, that they must retire with as many of their effects as they could carry off, and that he was going to raze their town to its foundation.

The magistrates came and threw themselves at his feet, and offered him a hundred thousand crowns for ransom. Steinbock demanded two hundred thousand. The inhabitants begged that they might, at least, be permitted to send to Hamburgh, where their correspondents resided, assuring him that next day they would send him that sum ; but the Swedish general replied, that they must give it instantly, or he would immediately set Altena in flames.

His troops were already in the suburbs with torches in their hands. A feeble wooden gate, and a ditch already filled up, were the only defence of the inhabitants of Altena. These unfortunate people were obliged to quit their houses



with precipitation in the middle of the night. It was the ninth of January, 1713. The rigour of the season, then excessive, was augmented by a violent north wind, which served at once to spread the flames with more expedition through the town, and to render the miseries of the poor people who were exposed in the open fields the more intolerable. Men and women weeping and wailing, and bending under the weight of their furniture, fled to the neighbouring hills, which were covered with snow. Many palsied old men were carried thither on the shoulders of the young. Several of the women, who were newly delivered, fled with their babes in their arms, and perished together from the cold on the hills, throwing their last looks towards the flames which consumed their country. All the inhabitants had not time to quit the town before the Swedes set fire to it. The conflagrations continued from midnight till ten in the morning. Almost all the houses being of wood, they were entirely consumed; and the next day there was not the least appearance that there had been a town on that spot.

The aged, the sick, and women of tender constitutions, who had taken refuge in the snow, while their houses were in flames, at last crawled to the gates of Hamburgh, and besought the inhabitants to receive them within the walls, and to save their lives. But this was denied them, because there had been some contagious distempers in Altena, and the Hamburghers had not so great a regard for its inhabitants as to expose themselves to the danger of having their own town infected by receiving them. Thus did the greatest part of these miserable people expire under the walls of Hamburgh, calling on heaven to witness the barbarity of the Swedes, and the treatment of the Hamburghers, which was not less inhuman.

All Germany cried out against this violence; the ministers and generals of Poland and Denmark wrote to Count Steinbock, reproaching him with a cruelty so enormous, as perpetrated without necessity, and remaining without excuse, provoked the vengeance of heaven and earth.

Steinbock replied, "that he should not have carried things to such extremities, except to teach the enemies of the king, his master, not to make war for the future like barbarians, but to pay some regard to the laws of nations ; that they had filled Pomerania with their cruelties, laid waste that beautiful province, and sold near a hundred thousand of the inhabitants to the Turks ; and that the torches which had laid Altena in ashes, were but reprisals for the red hot bullets by which Stade had been consumed."

Such was the fury with which the Swedes and their enemies carried on the war. If Charles had appeared in Pomerania at this time, it is reasonable to imagine he might have recovered his former good fortune. His armies, though removed at so great a distance from his person, were still animated by his spirit ; but the absence of a chief is always prejudicial to his affairs, and prevents even victories from being turned to account. Steinbock lost by piecemeal the great advantage he had gained by such signal actions, as at another time would have proved decisive.

Victorious as he was, he could not prevent the Russians, Danes, and Saxons, from joining. His quarters were beat up ; he lost some troops in several little skirmishes ; and two thousand of his men were drowned in passing the Eider, as they were going to their winter quarters in Holstein. All these losses, in a country surrounded on every side by powerful enemies, were utterly irreparable.

Holstein was, at this time, governed by its young duke, Frederic, aged twelve years, nephew of the king of Sweden, and son of that duke who had been killed at the battle of Clissau. The bishop of Lubeck, his uncle, governed this unhappy country with the title of administrator, which its sovereigns had never possessed in tranquillity.

The bishop, who feared for the states of his ward, was desirous to preserve an apparent neutrality ; but it was impossible to remain neuter between the army of the king of Sweden, whose heir the duke of Holstein might become, and the armies of the allies ready to invade that state.

Count Steinbock, pressed by the enemy, and no longer able to preserve his small army, summoned the bishop-administrator to consent to its being received within the fortress of Tonningen. The bishop found himself reduced either entirely to sacrifice the king's army, or to draw upon Holstein the vengeance of Denmark.

He had recourse to artifice, that dangerous resource of the weak. He ordered Colonel Wolf, who commanded in Tonningen, to receive the Swedish troops in his fortresses, but at the same time exacted of that officer that he should never mention that order, and Steinbock, on his side, took an oath to keep the negotiation secret.

It was necessary that Wolf should take upon himself to receive the army in his garrison as of his own authority, and that he should appear to disobey the orders of his sovereign. All this finesse turned out unfortunately for the duke, the country, and for Steinbock. The czar, the king of Denmark, and the king of Prussia, blockaded Tonningen. The provisions which were to have come to this small army, failed by a fatality, which through this whole war ruined the affairs of Sweden.

At last, Steinbock was forced to surrender himself prisoner to the king of Denmark, with his troops, on the 13th of March, 1713. Thus was this army irretrievably dissipated, which had gained the two celebrated victories of Helsingburg and Gadebush, under a general of whom was entertained the highest expectations; and the king of Denmark had the satisfaction to hold as his prisoner, the person who had thwarted all his designs, and reduced his town of Altena to ashes. Steinbock, when he quitted Tonningen, assured the king of Denmark that he had never entered that town but by stratagem, and that he had deceived the governor. This officer swore to the same thing, and preferred the dishonour of having been surprised to the divulging the secret of his master.

The duke of Holstein and the bishop-administrator pro-



tested that they had observed the neutrality; they implored the mediation of the king of Prussia and the elector of Hanover. But all this finesse not being supported by force, did not prevent the king of Denmark from besieging Wolf in Tonningen, a short time afterward, with his own troops and those of the czar. This commander surrendered as Steinbock had done, and at last confessed the secret, of which the Danes had but too many suspicions.

This furnished the king of Denmark with a pretext for taking possession of the states of the duke of Holstein, which have never yet been entirely restored to him. This same king of Denmark, who ravaged, without scruple, the duchy of Holstein, had yet the generosity to treat Steinbock with consideration, and gave an example that kings are often more guided by their interests than their revenge. He left the incendiary of Altena free upon his parole at Copenhagen, and affected to heap favours upon him; till Steinbock having attempted to escape, had the misfortune to be stopped, and to be convicted of having broke his parole. Then he was strictly guarded, and reduced to ask pardon of the king of Denmark, who granted it to him.

Pomerania being without defence, became a prey to the allies, excepting Stralsund, the Isle of Rugen, and some neighbouring places, and was sequestered in the hands of the king of Prussia. The states of Bremen were filled with Danish garrisons. At the same time the Russians overran Finland, and beat the Swedes, who, being inferior in point of numbers, and their resolution forsaking them, they began to lose their superiority of valour over enemies who were now inured to war.

To complete the misfortunes of Sweden, the king was obstinately determined to remain at Demotica, and still flattered himself with the hope of having assistance from the Turks, in whom he ought no longer to have reposed any confidence.

Ibrahim Molla, that bold vizier, who had been so obstinately bent on a war with the Russians, in opposition to the favourite, was strangled between two doors.

The place of vizier was become so dangerous, that no one dared to accept of it; it continued vacant six months. At last the favourite, Ali-Coumourgi, assumed the title of grand vizier. Then were all the hopes of the king of Sweden crushed at once. He knew Coumourgi so much the better, as he had been served by him when the interest of that favourite and his own happened to coincide.

Charles had now been eleven months at Demotica, buried in sloth and oblivion: this extreme indolence succeeding so suddenly the most violent exercises, had at last actually given him the disease which he had before feigned. His death was believed throughout Europe. The council of regency which he had established at Stockholm when he left his capital, no longer received any despatches from him. The senate came in a body to Princess Ulrica Eleonora, the king's sister, and intreated her to take the regency into her own hands, during the long absence of her brother. She accepted the proposal; but when she perceived that the senate wanted to oblige her to make a peace with the czar and the king of Denmark, who attacked Sweden on every side, and well knowing that her brother would never ratify such a peace, she resigned the regency, and sent into Turkey a long detail of the transaction.

Charles received his sister's packet at Demotica. The arbitrary principles which he had imbibed at his birth, made him forget that Sweden had formerly been free, and that in ancient times the senate governed the kingdom conjointly with the king. He regarded this body as a parcel of domestics, who wanted to usurp the command of the house in their master's absence; he wrote to them, that if they pretended to assume the reins of government, he would send them one of his boots, from which he would oblige them to receive their orders.

To prevent, therefore, these pretended attempts upon his authority in Sweden, and to defend his kingdom, now in the last extremity, deprived of all hopes of assistance from

the Ottoman Porte, and relying on himself alone, he signified to the grand vizier his desire of departing, and returning by the way of Germany.

M. des Alleurs, the French ambassador, who was charged with the affairs of Sweden, made the proposal in his name. "Well," said the vizier to him, "did not I tell you, that a year would not pass before the king of Sweden would desire to depart? Tell him it is at his choice to go or stay; but let him come to a fixed determination, and appoint the day of his departure, that he may not a second time embarrass us as he did at Bender."

Count des Alleurs softened the harshness of this answer to the king. The day was accordingly fixed; but before Charles would leave Turkey, he resolved to display the pomp of a great king, though involved in all the difficulties of a fugitive. He gave Grothusen the title of his ambassador-extraordinary, and sent him to take leave in form at Constantinople, followed by a retinue of eighty persons, all superbly dressed.

The divers stratagems to which he was reduced in order to raise a sufficiency to defray this expense, were as humiliating as the embassy was pompous.

M. des Alleurs lent the king forty thousand crowns. Grothusen had agents at Constantinople, who borrowed in his name, at the rate of fifty per cent. interest, a thousand crowns of a Jew, two hundred pistoles of an English merchant, and a thousand livres of a Turk.

In this manner did they amass a sum sufficient to enable them to act, in the presence of the divan, the brilliant comedy of the Swedish embassy. Grothusen received at Constantinople all the honours that the Porte usually pay to kings' ambassadors-extraordinary on the day of their audience. The design of all this parade was only to obtain money from the grand vizier; but that minister was inexorable.

Grothusen proposed the borrowing a million from the Porte. The vizier replied coldly, that his master knew how



to give when he thought proper, but that it was beneath his dignity to lend; that the king should be furnished with abundance of every thing necessary for his journey, in a manner worthy of the person that sent him back; and that the Porte, perhaps, might even make him a present in gold bullion, but that was not to be looked upon as certain.

At last, on the 1st of October, 1714, the king of Sweden set out on his journey from Turkey. A capigi pacha, with six chiaoux, came to attend him from the castle of Demirtash, where that prince had resided for some days past; he presented him, in the name of the grand seignor, with a large tent of scarlet, embroidered with gold, a sabre with the guard mounted with jewels, and eight beautiful Arabian horses, with fine saddles, and stirrups of massy silver. It is not beneath the dignity of history to observe, that the Arabian equerry who had had the care of the horses, gave the king an account of their genealogy; a custom which hath been long established among these people, who seem to pay more attention to the nobility of their horses, than to that of their men; which is not perhaps so unreasonable, as among animals, those breeds of which care is taken, and which are not crossed, are never found to degenerate.

Sixty wagons loaded with all sorts of provisions, and three hundred horses, comprised the convoy. The capigi pacha understanding that several Turks had lent money to the king of Sweden's attendants at an immoderate interest, told his majesty, that usury being contrary to the Mahometan law, he intreated him to liquidate all these debts, and to order his resident, whom he should leave at Constantinople, to pay no more than the capital. "No," said the king, "if any of my domestics have given bills for an hundred crowns, I will pay them, though they should not even have received ten."

He made a proposal to his creditors to follow him, with an assurance that he would not only pay them what he owed, but all their expenses. Several of them went to Sweden; and Grothusen took care to see them paid.

The Turks, in order to show the greater deference to their royal guest, made him travel by very short stages; but this respectful motion was ill suited to the impatient spirit of the king. During the journey, he got up at three in the morning, according to his usual custom. As soon as he was dressed, he went himself and awakened the capigi and chiaoux, and ordered the march during the darkness of the night. The Turkish gravity was deranged by this new method of travelling; but Charles took pleasure in seeing them embarrassed, and said, it was some little revenge for the affair of Bender.

About the time that Charles reached the frontiers of Turkey, Stanislaus was leaving them by a different road, and going into Germany, with a view of retiring into the dutchy of Deux-Points, a province bordering on the palatinate of Alsace and the Rhine, and which has belonged to the kings of Sweden ever since Charles X., the successor of Christina, had united it to the crown. Charles assigned to Stanislaus the revenue of this dutchy, estimated at that time at about seventy thousand crowns. Such was the issue of so many projects, wars, and expectations! Stanislaus could and would have made an advantageous treaty with Augustus; but the inflexible obstinacy of Charles made him lose his lands and real possessions in Poland, to preserve the title of king.

This prince remained in the dutchy of Deux-Points till the death of Charles XII., when that province reverting to a prince of the palatine family, he chose his retreat in Wissemburgh, in French Alsace. Mr. Sum, envoy from King Augustus, making a complaint of this to the duke of Orleans, regent of France, the duke returned him an answer in these remarkable words; "Sir, tell the king, your master, that France has ever been the asylum of kings in distress."

The king of Sweden being arrived on the confines of Germany, was given to understand, that the emperor had given orders to receive him in every part of his dominions with a becoming magnificence. The towns and villages through

which the quarter masters had previously fixed his route, had made great preparations for receiving him; all the people waited with impatience to see this extraordinary man pass by, whose victories and misfortunes, whose most trifling actions, and even his keeping his bed, had made so great a noise in Europe and Asia. But Charles had no desire to bear the fatigue of so much pomp, or to exhibit as a spectacle, the prisoner of Bender; he had even resolved never to re-enter Stockholm until he should have repaired his losses by a change of fortune.

When he arrived at Targowitz, on the frontiers of Transylvania, after he had taken leave of his Turkish convoy, he assembled his attendants in a barn, and told them all not to give themselves any uneasiness about his person, but to proceed with all possible expedition to Stralsund in Pomerania, on the coast of the Baltic sea, about three hundred leagues from the place where they then were.

He took nobody with him except two officers, Rosen and During, and taking a cheerful leave of the rest of his attendants, left them filled with fear, sorrow, and astonishment. To disguise himself, he put on a black wig, as he always wore his own hair, a gold laced hat, a gray coat, and blue cloak; and, taking the name of a German officer, rode post with his two fellow travellers.

He avoided in his way as much as possible, the territories of either his declared or secret enemies, taking the road through Hungary, Moravia, Bavaria, Austria, Wirtemberg, the Palatinate, Westphalia, and Mecklenburg; by which means he almost made the tour of Germany, and lengthened his journey by one half. Having rode the whole first day without intermission, young During, who was not so much inured to these excessive fatigues, fainted as he was dismounting. The king, who was determined not to stop a moment on the road, asked During, as soon as he came to himself, how much money he had. Upon During's replying that he had about a thousand crowns in gold. "Give me half of



them," said the king, "I see you are not in a condition to follow me; I will therefore finish the journey by myself." During begged he would permit him to repose himself but for three hours, assuring him that by that time he should be able to remount his horse and attend his majesty, and conjured him to think of the dangers to which he was going to expose himself. The king, inexorable, made him give him five hundred crowns, and called for horses. During, alarmed at this resolution, bethought himself of an innocent stratagem; he took the post-master aside, and pointing to the king of Sweden, "that gentleman," said he, "is my cousin; we are travelling together upon the same business; he sees that I am ill, and yet he will not wait for me, even for three hours; give him, I beseech you, the worst horse in your stable; and let me have a cart or any post carriage."

He split two ducats into the post-master's hand, who exactly performed his orders; the king had a horse given him that was both lame and restive; such was the equipage with which this monarch set out at ten o'clock at night, amidst darkness, rain, wind, and snow. His fellow traveller, after having slept a few hours, followed him in a cart drawn by strong horses.

About day-break, at the distance of a few miles, he overtook the king, who not being able to make his horse move on, was travelling on foot to the next stage.

Charles was obliged to get into During's cart, where he slept upon the straw. Thus they continued their journey, by day on horseback, and sleeping by night in a cart, without stopping in any place.

After sixteen days travelling, not without danger of being taken more than once, they arrived at last, on the twenty-first of November, in the year 1714, at the gates of the town of Stralsund, about one in the morning.

The king called to the sentinel, and told him that he was a courier despatched from Turkey by the king of Sweden, and that he must speak that moment with General Ducker,

the governor of the place. The sentinel answered, that it was too late; that the governor was gone to bed; and that he must wait till break of day.

The king replied, that he came upon business of importance, and told them that if they did not instantly go and awaken the governor, they should be punished the next morning. A serjeant, at last, went and called up the governor. Ducker imagined that it might perhaps be one of the king's generals; he therefore caused the gates to be opened, and the courier was introduced into his chamber.

Ducker, half asleep, asked him, "what news of the king of Sweden?" The king taking him by the arm, "What," said he, "Ducker, have my most faithful subjects forgot me?" The general immediately recollected the king, though he could scarce believe his eyes; and throwing himself from the bed, embraced his master's knees with tears of joy. The news was in an instant spread through the town. Every one got up; the soldiers surrounded the governor's house. The streets were crowded with the inhabitants, asking each other whether it was true that the king was come. Every window was illuminated, wine ran through the streets, amidst the blaze of a thousand flambeaux, and the discharges of the artillery.

In the mean time, the king was put into a bed, in which he had not been for above sixteen days; his boots were obliged to be cut from his legs, they being so much swollen by his extreme fatigue. As he had neither linen nor clothes, they furnished him with a wardrobe as well as the town could afford, with all expedition. When he had slept a few hours, he arose, and went directly to review his troops and visit his fortifications. The same day, he despatched orders into all parts for renewing the war against his enemies with greater vigour than ever. These particulars, so conformable to the extraordinary character of Charles XII., were communicated to me by M. Fabricius, and afterwards confirmed by Count Croissy, ambassador to the king of Sweden.

The christian part of Europe was now in a situation far different from that in which it was when Charles quitted it in 1709.

The war which had so long raged throughout the south, that is to say, in Germany, England, Holland, France, Spain, Portugal, and Italy, was now terminated. This general peace had been brought about by some private intrigues in the English court. The earl of Oxford, an able minister, and Lord Bolingbroke, one of the greatest geniuses and the most eloquent orator of the age, had prevailed over the famous duke of Marlborough, and persuaded the queen to make a peace with Louis XIV. France having no longer England for her enemy, soon obliged the powers to come to an accommodation.

Philip V., the grandson of Louis XIV., began to reign peaceably over the ruins of the Spanish monarchy. The emperor of Germany became master of Naples and Flanders, established himself in his vast dominions; and Louis himself aspired no higher than to finish in peace his long career.

Anne, queen of England, died on the 10th of August, 1714, hated by half the nation for having given peace to so many kingdoms. Her brother, James Stuart, an unhappy prince, excluded from the throne almost at his birth, not being at that time in England to claim the succession, which new laws would have given him if his party could have prevailed, George I. elector of Hanover, was unanimously acknowledged king of Great Britain. The throne devolved to that elector, not by right of blood, though descended from a daughter of James, but by virtue of an act of parliament of that nation.

George, called in an advanced age to the government of a people whose language he did not understand, and to whom he was an entire stranger, regarded himself rather as elector of Hanover than king of England. His whole ambition was to aggrandize his German dominions. He almost always



went once a year to visit his hereditary subjects, by whom he was adored. In other respects, he took more pleasure in living like a private man than a sovereign. The pomp of royalty was to him an insupportable burden. He passed his time with a few old courtiers, with whom he lived in great familiarity. He was not the king that made the greatest figure in Europe; but he was one of the wisest princes of the age, and perhaps the only one that experienced, on a throne, the pleasures of friendship and a private life. Such were the principal monarchs, and such the situation of the south of Europe.

The changes that happened in the north were of another nature. Its kings were engaged in war, and united themselves against the king of Sweden.

Augustus had been long restored to the throne of Poland by the assistance of the czar, and with the consent of the emperor of Germany, of Anne of England, and of the States General, who, though all guarantees of the treaty of Altranstad when Charles XII. could have imposed laws, abandoned their engagement when they had nothing more to fear from him.

But Augustus did not enjoy a tranquil authority. The republic of Poland no sooner recalled their king, than their apprehensions of arbitrary power began to revive; the nation was in arms to oblige him to conform to the *pacta conventa*, a sacred contract between the king and the people, and seemed to have recalled its sovereign for no other purpose than to declare war against him. At the commencement of these troubles, the name of Stanislaus was not once mentioned; his party seemed to be annihilated; no other remembrance of the king of Sweden remained in Poland, than as of a torrent, which, in the violence of its course, had for a time occasioned a change in the face of nature.

Pultowa, and the absence of Charles XII., by causing the fall of Stanislaus, had drawn on the ruin also of the duke of Holstein, Charles's nephew, who had not long before been

despoiled of his dominions by the king of Denmark. The king of Sweden had had a sincere regard for the father, and was therefore deeply affected and mortified with the misfortunes of the son; the rather, as having no other object than glory, the fall of those princes whom he had either made or restored was, by him, felt as sensibly as the loss of so many provinces.

Every one was at liberty to enrich himself with the ruin of Charles's fortune. Frederic William, the new king of Prussia, who appeared to have as much inclination for war as his father had had for peace, began by seizing on Stettin and part of Pomerania, as an equivalent for four hundred thousand crowns which he had advanced to the king of Denmark and to the czar.

George, elector of Hanover, now become king of England, had likewise sequestered into his hands the dutchy of Bremen and Verdun, which the king of Denmark had assigned to him as a deposit for sixty thousand pistoles. Thus did they dispose of the spoils of Charles XII.; and those who possessed any of his dominions as pledges, became, from their interests, as dangerous enemies as those who had taken them.

As to the czar, he was doubtless the most to be feared: his former defeats, his victories, his very faults, his perseverance to instruct himself, and then to communicate that knowledge to his subjects, together with his incessant labours, had made him a great man in every respect. Riga was already taken; Livonia, Ingria, Carelia, half of Finland, so many provinces that had been conquered by Charles's ancestors, were now subjected to the Russian yoke.

Peter Alexiowitz, who, twenty years before, had not a single vessel in the Baltic, at this time beheld himself master of that sea, at the head of a fleet of thirty ships of the line.

One of these ships had been built by his own hands; he being the best carpenter, the best admiral, and the best pilot in the north. There was not a difficult passage of the gulf

of Bothnia to the ocean which he had not sounded himself; and having thus joined the labours of a common sailor to the experience of a philosopher and the plans of an emperor, he arrived by degrees, and by dint of victories, to the rank of admiral, in the same manner as he had become a general in the land service.

While Prince Gallitzin, a general formed under his own auspices, and one of those who seconded his enterprises the best, completed the conquest of Finland, took the town of Vasa, and beat the Swedes; the emperor put to sea, in order to take the island of Alan, situated in the Baltic, about twelve leagues from Stockholm.

He set out on this expedition in the beginning of July, 1714, at the time that his rival, Charles XII., was keeping his bed at Demotica. He embarked at Gronslof port, which he had built some years before, about four miles from Petersburg. The new port, the fleet which it contained, the officers, the sailors, were all the work of his own hands; and wherever he turned his eyes, he could behold nothing but what he himself had in some measure created.

The Russian fleet, which consisted of thirty ships of the line, eighty gallies, and a hundred half gallies, found itself, on the 15th of July, on the coast of Alan. There were twenty thousand soldiers on board: Admiral Apraxin was commander-in-chief; and the Russian emperor served in the capacity of rear-admiral. On the 16th, the Swedish fleet, commanded by Vice-Admiral Erinchild, came up; and, though weaker by two-thirds, maintained a fight for the space of three hours. The czar attacked Erinchild's ship, and took her after an obstinate engagement.

The day of the victory he landed sixteen thousand men on the isle of Alan; and having taken a number of Swedish soldiers that had not been able to get on board Erinchild's fleet, he carried them off in his own ships. He returned into his harbour of Gronslof, with Erinchild's large ship, three others of less size, one frigate, and six gallies, which he had made himself master of in this engagement.



Having left Grönslet, he arrived at Petersburg, followed by the whole of his victorious fleet, together with the ships taken from the enemy. He was saluted by a triple discharge of a hundred and fifty pieces of cannon; after which he made a triumphal entry, which flattered his vanity still more than that at Moscow, because he received these honours in his favourite town, where but ten years before there was not a single hut, and where, at that time, he beheld thirty-four thousand five hundred houses; in short, because he saw himself not only at the head of a victorious navy, but of the first Russian fleet that was ever seen in the Baltic Sea, and in a country in which, before his time, the very name of a fleet was unknown.

Almost the same ceremonies were observed at Petersburg which had decorated the triumph at Moscow. The Swedish vice-admiral was the principal ornament of this new triumph. Peter Alexiowitz appeared as rear-admiral. A Russian boyard, named Romanodowsky, who usually represented the czar on these solemn occasions, was seated on a throne surrounded by twelve senators. The rear-admiral presented to him a relation of his victory, and was declared vice-admiral, in consideration of his services; a whimsical ceremony, but at the same time proper in a country where military subordination was one of the novelties which the czar had introduced.

The emperor of Russia, at last victorious over the Swedes by sea and land, and having assisted in driving them from Poland, began to exercise his authority there in his turn. He had made himself a mediator between Augustus and the republic; a glory, perhaps, not inferior to that of creating a king. This honour, and, indeed, all the good fortune of Charles, had fallen to the czar, who certainly made a better use of these advantages than his rival, as his successes were so managed as to contribute to the interest of his country. If he took a town, the principal artisans in it carried their industry along with them to Petersburg. The manufac-

tures, the arts and sciences of the provinces which he conquered in Sweden, were transported into Muscovy, his dominions were enriched by his victories, a circumstance that makes him the most excusable of all conquerors.

Sweden, on the contrary, despoiled of almost all her provinces beyond sea, had neither commerce, money, nor credit. Her veteran troops, which formerly were so formidable, had either fallen in battle or perished with hunger. More than a hundred thousand Swedes were slaves in the vast dominions of the czar; and about the same number had been sold to the Turks and Tartars. The human species visibly diminished, but hope revived as soon as the king was known to be at Stralsund.

The impressions of respect and admiration for him were still so strongly implanted in the minds of his subjects, that the youth of the country came in crowds to enlist under his banners, though their native soil wanted hands to cultivate it.

## BOOK VIII.

**ARGUMENT.**—Charles gives his sister in marriage to the prince of Hesse.—Is besieged at Stralsund, and escapes to Sweden.—Enterprise of Baron de Gortz, his prime minister.—Plan of a reconciliation with the czar, and of a descent upon England.—Charles besieges Frederickshall in Norway.—Is killed.—His character.—Gortz is beheaded.

THE king, in the midst of these preparations, gave his only surviving sister, Ulrica-Eleonora, in marriage to Frederick prince of Hesse Cassel. The queen-dowager, grandmother of Charles XII. and the princess, at that time in the eightieth year of her age, did the honours of this festival, on the fourth of April, 1715, in the palace of Stockholm, and died a little time after.

The marriage was not honoured with the presence of the king; he was still at Stralsund, finishing the fortifications of that important place, threatened with a siege by the kings of Denmark and Prussia. He declared, however, his brother-in-law generalissimo of all his forces in Sweden. This prince had served the States-General in their wars with the French, and was esteemed a good general; a qualification which contributed not a little to procure him the sister of Charles XII. in marriage.

Misfortunes now followed one another as rapidly as victories had formerly done. In the month of June, 1715, the German troops of the king of England, with those of Denmark, invested the strong town of Wismar: the Danes and Saxons united formed about thirty-six thousand men, who marched towards Stralsund, to form the siege of that place. The kings of Denmark and Prussia sunk five Swedish ships near to Stralsund. The czar was then in the Baltic, with twenty large ships of war, and a hundred and fifty transports, on board of which were thirty thousand men. He menaced



a descent upon Sweden ; sometimes advancing near to the coast of Helsimburgh, and at others appearing before Stockholm. All Sweden was in arms upon the coasts, every moment expecting an invasion. In the mean time, the czar's land forces drove the Swedes from post to post, until they had dispossessed them of all the places they still held in Finland, toward the gulf of Bothnia ; but the czar carried his conquests no farther.

At the mouth of the Oder, a river that divides Pomerania, and, after washing the walls of Stetin, falls into the Baltic Sea, is the little isle of Usedom : this place is of great importance on account of its situation, which commands the Oder, both on the right and left ; so that the person who is master of this island, is at the same time master of the navigation of the river. The king of Prussia had dislodged the Swedes from this place, and had taken possession of it, as well as of Stetin, which he kept sequestered, and all, as he said, *pour l'amour de la paix*, i. e. "for the love of peace." The Swedes had retaken Usedom in the month of May, 1715. They had two forts there ; one of which was the fort of Suine, upon the branch of the Oder that bore the same name ; the other, a place of more consequence, was called Pennamender, situated upon the other branch of the river. The king of Sweden had but two hundred and fifty Pomeranian soldiers to defend two forts and the whole island, commanded by an old Swedish officer named Kuze-Slerp, whose name deserves to be preserved.

On the fourth of August, the king of Prussia sent fifteen hundred foot and eight hundred dragoons to make a descent upon the island, and they landed without opposition near the fort of Suine. The Swedish commander abandoned this fort to the enemy, as being the least important ; and as he could not safely divide his men, he retired with his little troop to the castle of Pennamender, resolute to defend it to the last extremity.

There was, therefore, a necessity of besieging it in form. A train of artillery was embarked at Stetin for this effect,

and the Prussian troops were reinforced with a thousand foot and four hundred horse. On the 18th of August the trenches were opened in two places, and the fort was briskly battered with cannon and mortars. During the siege, a Swedish soldier, who was charged with a private letter from Charles XII., found means to land on the island, to get into the fort of Pennamender, and to deliver the letter to the commander; it was couched in the following words: "Do not fire till the enemy come to the brink of the fosse; defend the place to the last drop of your blood; I commend you to your good fortune. CHARLES."

Slerp having read the note, resolved to obey, and to lay down his life, as he was ordered, for the service of his master. On the twenty-second, at the break of day, the enemy began the assault; the besieged having kept in their fire till they saw the besiegers on the brink of the fosse, killed a great number of them; but the ditch was full, the breach enlarged, and the assailants too numerous. They entered the castle at two different places at one time. The commander thought of nothing but of selling his life as dear as possible, and obeying his master's letter. He abandoned the breaches through which the enemy entered; intrenched his little company, who had all the courage and fidelity to follow him, behind a bastion, and posted them in such a manner, that they could not be surrounded. The enemy came up to him, astonished that he did not ask for quarter. He fought for a whole hour; and, after having lost the half of his men, was at last killed, together with his lieutenant and major. After this, the surviving few, amounting to a hundred soldiers and one officer, begged their lives, and were made prisoners of war. They found Charles's letter in the commander's pocket, and carried it to the king of Prussia.

At the time that Charles lost Usedom, and the neighbouring isles, which were soon after taken; that Wismar was ready to surrender; that he no longer possessed a fleet, and Sweden was threatened with an invasion; he himself was

in Stralsund, and that place was already besieged by thirty-six thousand men.

Stralsund, a town become famous throughout Europe for the siege which the king of Sweden sustained in it, is the strongest place in Pomerania. It is situated between the Baltic Sea and the lake of Franken, upon the straits of Gella; having no entrance to it by land, except by a narrow causeway, defended by a citadel, and by fortifications which were imagined inaccessible. It had a garrison of about nine thousand men, and what was beyond all, the king of Sweden himself. The kings of Denmark and Prussia undertook the siege of this place, with an army of six-and-thirty thousand men, composed of Prussians, Danes, and Saxons.

The honour of besieging Charles XII. was so powerful a motive, that they soon surmounted every obstacle, and opened the trenches in the night, between the 19th and 20th of October, 1715. The king of Sweden, at the beginning of the siege, said, that he could not comprehend how a place well fortified, and provided with a sufficient garrison, could be taken. Not but that in the course of his past victories he had taken several places himself, but hardly ever by a regular siege; the terror of his arms had carried every thing before them; besides, he never judged of other people by himself, but always entertained too low an opinion of his enemies. The besiegers carried on their works with vigour and resolution, and were seconded by a very singular accident.

It is well known that the Baltic Sea neither ebbs nor flows. The intrenchments which covered the town, and which were defended on the west by an impassable morass, and by the sea on the east, seemed to be secure from every assault. Nobody had ever noticed, that when the west wind blew with any violence, the waves of the Baltic were driven back in such a manner, as to leave but three feet depth of water under the fortifications, which had always been supposed to be washed by so great a depth of water, as to be impracticable. A soldier having fallen from the top of the fortifications into



the sea, was astonished to find a bottom ; he imagined that this discovery might make his fortune, and accordingly deserted, and went to the quarters of Count Wackenbarth, general of the Saxon troops, to inform him that the sea was fordable, and that he might penetrate, without much difficulty, to the Swedish fortifications. The king of Prussia did not delay to profit by this intelligence.

In the middle of the next night, the west wind still continuing, Lieutenant Colonel Koppen entered the water, followed by eighteen hundred men ; two thousand advanced at the same time upon the causeway that led to the fort ; all the Prussian artillery fired, and the Danes and Prussians gave an alarm on the other side.

The Swedes imagined themselves sure of destroying the two thousand men whom they saw advancing with so much apparent rashness upon the causeway ; but all of a sudden, Koppen, with his eighteen hundred men, entered the intrenchment on the side toward the sea. The Swedes, surrounded and surprised, could make no resistance, and the post was carried after a terrible carnage. Some of the Swedes fled toward the town ; the besiegers pursued them thither, and entered pell-mell along with the fugitives : two officers and four Saxon soldiers were already on the draw-bridge, which the Swedes had just time to raise ; so that the men were taken, and the town saved for that time.

The enemy found in the fort twenty-four pieces of cannon, which they immediately turned against Stralsund. The siege was pushed with such vigour and confidence as this success could not fail to inspire. The town was cannonaded and bombarded almost without intermission.

Opposite to Stralsund, in the Baltic Sea, is the isle of Rugen, which serves as a bulwark to that place, and into which the garrison and citizens might have retired, had they had boats to have transported them thither. This island was of great consequence to Charles ; he saw very clearly, that if the enemy were once masters of it, he should find himself besieged both by sea and land and perhaps be reduced

to so great extremities, that he must either bury himself in the ruins of Stralsund, or become a prisoner to those very enemies whom he had so long despised, and upon whom he had imposed the most severe laws. But, notwithstanding all this, the unhappy situation of his affairs did not permit him to place a sufficient garrison in Rugen, in which there were not more than two thousand men.

His enemies had been employed for three months before, in making all the necessary preparations for a descent upon this island, upon which it is exceedingly difficult to effect a landing. At last, having finished a number of boats, the prince of Anhalt, with the assistance of favourable weather, landed twelve thousand men upon Rugen, on the fifteenth of November. The king, who seemed to be present every where, was at that time in the island; he had just before joined his two thousand men, who were intrenched near a small port, three leagues from the place where the enemy had landed; he immediately put himself at the head of this little troop, and, observing the most profound silence, advanced in the middle of the night toward the enemy. The prince of Anhalt had already intrenched his forces, with a precaution which appeared unnecessary. The officers commanding under him, had no idea of being attacked the very first night, and imagined Charles to be at Stralsund; but the prince of Anhalt, who well knew what Charles was capable of, had caused a deep fosse to be sunk, fenced with a chevaux-de-frise, and taken all his measures with as much circumspection as if he had a superior army to contend with.

At two in the morning Charles came up with his enemies, without making the least noise. His soldiers saying to each other, "pull up the chevaux-de-frise," the words were overheard by the sentinels, the alarm was immediately given through the camp, and the enemies were instantly under arms. The king, having taken up the chevaux-de-frise, perceived a deep fosse before him. "Ah!" said he, "is it possible! I did not expect this." However, this surprise did not discourage him. He knew not the number of troops

landed; the enemy also, on their side, were ignorant what a small number they had to engage with. The darkness of the night seemed favourable to Charles; he took his resolution in a moment, and jumped into the ditch, accompanied by the bravest of his men, and instantly followed by the rest: the chevaux-de-frise which were plucked up, the levelled earth, the trunks and branches of such trees as they could find, and the carcasses of the soldiers that were killed by random shot, served for fascines. The king, the generals, and the bravest of the officers and soldiers, mounted upon one another's shoulders, as in an assault. The battle is now fought in the enemy's camp. The impetuosity of the Swedes soon threw the Danes and Prussians into confusion; but the numbers were too unequal; the Swedes were repulsed, after fighting for a quarter of an hour, and were obliged to repass the fosse. The prince of Anhalt pursued them into the plain, but knew not that it was Charles XII. that fled before him. That unfortunate king rallied his troops in the open field, and the battle was renewed with equal obstinacy on both sides. Grothusen, the king's favourite, and General Dardoff, fell dead at his feet. In the heat of the battle, Charles passed over the body of the latter, who was still breathing. During, the only person who had accompanied him in his journey from Turkey to Stralsund, was killed before his face.

In the midst of the tumult, a Danish lieutenant, whose name I have never been able to learn, recognized the king; and seizing his sword with one hand, and with the other pulling him violently by the hair, said to him. "Yield, Sire, or I kill you." The king had a pistol in his belt, which he fired with his left hand at that officer, who died of the wound the next morning. The name of King Charles, which the Dane had pronounced, immediately drew a crowd of the enemy together. The king was surrounded, and received a musket-shot below the nipple of his left breast: this wound, which he called a contusion, was two fingers deep. The king was on foot, and in danger of either being



killed or taken prisoner. Count Poniatowsky was fighting, at this time, near his majesty's person. He had saved his life at Pultowa, and had now the good fortune to save it once more in the battle of Rugen; he set him on horseback.

The Swedes retired to a part of the island called Alteferra, where there was a fort, of which they were still masters. From thence the king repassed over to Stralsund, obliged to abandon his brave troops, who had so well seconded him in this enterprise; and two days after they were all made prisoners of war.

Among the prisoners was that unhappy French regiment, composed of the shattered remains of the battle of Hochstet, which had entered into the service of Augustus, and afterwards into that of the king of Sweden. The greatest part of the soldiers were now incorporated into a new regiment, commanded by the prince of Anhalt's son, who was their fourth master.

The commander of this wandering regiment in the isle of Rugen, was the same Count de Villelongue who had so generously exposed his life at Adrianople in the service of Charles. He was taken prisoner with his troop, and was afterwards but poorly recompensed for all his services, labours, and sufferings.

The king, after all these prodigies of valour, which served only to weaken his forces, shut up in Stralsund, and near being forced in it, was the same he had been at Bender. He was shaken by nothing; he employed the day in making ditches and intrenchments behind the walls, and in the night he made sallies upon the enemy. In the mean time, Stralsund was battered in breach: the bombs fell as thick as hail upon the houses, and half the town was reduced to ashes; the citizens, however, so far from complaining, were filled with the highest veneration for their royal master, whose fatigues, temperance, and courage, astonished them; they were all become soldiers under him; they accompanied him in all his sallies, and served him the place of a second garrison.

One day, as the king was dictating some letters to his secretary, to be sent to Sweden, a bomb fell on the house, pierced the roof, and burst near the apartment in which he was. One half of the floor was shattered to pieces; the closet where the king was employed, being partly formed out of a thick wall, did not suffer by the explosion; and, by an astonishing piece of fortune, none of the splinters that flew about in the air entered at the closet-door, which happened to be open. The report of the bomb, and the noise it occasioned in the house, which seemed ready to tumble, made the secretary drop his pen. "What is the matter," said the king, with a placid air, "why do you not write?" The secretary could only say, "Ah, sire, the bomb!" "Well," replied the king, "what has the bomb to do with the letter I am dictating to you? Go on."

There was, at this time, an ambassador of France shut up with the king of Sweden in Stralsund. It was Monsieur Colbert, Count de Croissy, a lieutenant-general in the French army, brother to the Marquis de Torcy, the celebrated minister of state, and a relation of the famous Colbert, whose name ought to be immortal in France. To send a man into the trenches or on an embassy to Charles XII. was pretty nigh the same thing. The king would talk with Croissy for whole hours together in the most exposed places, while the soldiers were falling on every side of them by the fire of the cannon and bombs, without appearing in the least sensible of the risk he run, and the ambassador not choosing to give his majesty so much as a hint that there were more proper places to talk of business. This minister did every thing he was able, before the siege began, to effect an accommodation between the kings of Sweden and Prussia; but the demands of the latter were too high, and Charles would make no concessions. Count de Croissy derived no other satisfaction from his embassy, than the pleasure of enjoying the familiarity of that singular man. He often lay by his majesty upon the same cloak; and had, by partaking of all his dangers and fatigues, acquired a right of talking to him with

freedom. Charles encouraged this boldness in those he loved ; and would sometimes say to the Count de Croissy, "*Veni, maledicamus de rege ;*" i. e. "Come, now let us make free with the character of the king." This account I had from the ambassador himself.

Croissy continued in the town till the 13th of November, when, having obtained from the enemy permission to go away with his baggage, he took his leave of the king, whom he left amidst the ruins of Stralsund, with a garrison diminished by one half, and resolved to stand an assault.

In short, two days after, an assault was actually made upon the horn-work. The enemy twice took it, and twice were driven back. The king fought the whole time amidst his grenadiers ; but at last numbers prevailed, and the besiegers remained masters of the place ; Charles continued in the town two days after this, expecting every moment a general assault. On the 21st he staid till midnight upon a little ravelin, that was entirely demolished by the bombs and cannon : the next day, the principal officers conjured him not to stay in a place which it was no longer possible to defend ; but his retreat was now become as dangerous as the place itself. The Baltic Sea was covered with Russian and Danish ships, and there were no vessels in the harbour of Stralsund but one small bark with sails and oars. So many dangers, which would render his retreat illustrious, determined Charles to attempt it. He embarked in the night on the 20th of December, 1715, accompanied by ten persons only. They were obliged to break the ice with which the water of the port was covered ; a laborious task, which employed them several hours before the bark could sail freely. The enemy's admirals had positive orders not to suffer Charles to escape from Stralsund, but to take him, dead or alive. Happily they were under the wind, and were not able to get to him ; but he run a still greater risk in passing by a place called La Barbette, in the Isle of Rugen, where the Danes had erected a battery of twelve cannon, from which they fired upon him. The mariners spread every sail,



and plied every oar, to get clear of the enemy ; but notwithstanding, a cannon ball killed two men by the king's side, and another shattered the mast of the bark. In the midst of these dangers, the king escaped unhurt, and at last came up with two of his own ships that were cruising in the Baltic. The next day Stralsund surrendered, and the garrison were made prisoners of war. Charles landed at Isted, in Scania, from which place he repaired to Carlescroon, in a condition very different from what he was in, when, about fifteen years before, he set sail from that harbour in a ship of an hundred and twenty guns, to give laws to the north.

Being so near his capital, it was expected that after such a long absence he would visit that place ; but his design was never to enter it again, till he had obtained some signal victory. Besides, he could not bear the thoughts of again seeing a people by whom he was beloved, and whom, nevertheless, he was obliged to oppress, in order to enable him to defend himself against his enemies. He only wanted to see his sister, with whom he appointed an interview on the banks of the lake Weter, in Ostrogothia, whither he rode post, attended only by a single domestic, and returned after having spent a day with her.

From Carlescroon, where he sojourned during the winter, he issued out orders for raising men throughout his whole kingdom. He thought that his subjects were born only to follow him to the field of battle, and had accustomed them to think so too. Young people were enlisted at the age of fifteen ; and in several villages there were none left but old men, women, and children, and in many places women only were seen ploughing the land.

It was still more difficult to procure a fleet. To supply the want of this, commissions were granted to the owners of privateers, who, upon obtaining certain privileges, unreasonable in themselves, and destructive to the country, equipped a few ships : these efforts were the last resources of Sweden. To defray the expenses of these preparations, he was obliged to take the substance of the people. Every

kind of extortion was invented, under the name of taxes and duties. Strict search was made in every house, and one half of the provisions found in them was carried to the king's magazines; all the iron in the kingdom was bought up for his use, which government paid for in paper, and sold out again for ready money. A tax was laid on every one who wore any mixture of silk in their clothes, or wore either perukes or gilt swords. A very heavy tax was also laid on chimneys. The people, oppressed with such a load of taxes, would have revolted under any other king; but the poorest peasant in Sweden knew that his master led a life still more hard and frugal than himself; so that every one submitted without murmuring to those hardships which the king was first to suffer.

The public danger served to make them forget their private misfortunes. They expected every moment to see their country invaded by the Russians, the Danes, the Prussians, the Saxons, and even by the English; and this fear was so rooted and so strong, that those who had money, or valuable effects, buried them in the earth.

In effect, an English fleet had already appeared in the Baltic, though its particular destination was not known; and the czar had given his word to the king of Denmark, that the Russians should join the Danes, in the spring of 1716, in order to make a descent upon Sweden.

But it was an extreme surprize to all Europe, which was attentive to the fortunes of Charles XII., when, instead of defending his own country, which was threatened by so many princes, he passed, in the month of March, 1716, over into Norway, with twenty thousand men.

No general had been known since Hannibal, who, from inability to defend himself at home against his enemies, had undertaken to carry the war into the heart of their own dominions. The prince of Hesse, his brother-in-law, accompanied him in this expedition.

There is no travelling from Sweden to Norway but through the most dangerous defiles; and when these are passed, one

is continually meeting with so many lakes of water formed by the sea amongst the rocks, that there is a necessity for making bridges every day. A small number of Danes might have stopped the progress of the whole Swedish army; but this sudden invasion they had not foreseen. Europe was still more astonished that the czar remained quiet in the midst of all these mighty events, and that he did not make a descent upon Sweden, as had formerly been stipulated between him and his allies.

This inactivity was owing to one of the greatest, and at the same time most difficult, schemes that ever was formed by human imagination.

The Baron Henry de Gortz, a native of Franconia, and a baron *in capite* of the empire, having rendered several important offices to the king of Sweden during that monarch's stay at Bender, was now become his favourite and first minister.

Never was there a man so bold, and, at the same time, so artful; so full of expedients amidst misfortunes; so unbounded in his designs, or so active in the prosecution of them: he was frightened by no project, he scrupled no means; he lavished gifts, promises, oaths, truth, and falsehood.

From Sweden he went to France, England, and Holland, to try those secret springs which he afterwards meant to put in motion. He was capable of disturbing all Europe; and, indeed, he had such a plan in his mind. What his master was at the head of an army, he was in the cabinet; and in consequence he had acquired an ascendancy over Charles, which no minister had possessed before him.

That king, who when only twenty years of age had prescribed orders to Count Piper, now received instructions from Baron de Gortz; so much the more submissive to the direction of that minister, as his misfortunes obliged him to listen to the advice of others, and as Gortz never gave him any but such as was conformable to his courage. He remarked, that of all the princes united against Sweden, George,



elector of Hanover and king of England, was the one against whom Charles was most highly incensed, because he was the only one that he had never offended; and because George had entered into the quarrel under the pretext of accommodating it, but in reality to keep Bremen and Verdun, to which he seemed to have no other right than that of having bought them for a trifle from the king of Denmark, to whom, after all, they did not belong.

He also suspected that the czar was secretly dissatisfied with his allies, who had all conspired to hinder him from acquiring an establishment in Germany, where that monarch, already become too formidable, wanted only to obtain a footing. Wismar, the only town which still remained to the Swedes on the frontiers of Germany, on the 14th of February, 1716, surrendered to the Danes and Prussians, who would not even suffer the Russian troops that were then in Mecklenburgh to be present at the siege. Similar jealousies, reiterated for two years together, had alienated the czar's mind from the common cause, and perhaps prevented the ruin of Sweden. There are many instances of several states in alliance being conquered by a single power, but scarcely any of a great empire being totally subdued by several allies; for if their united forces happen, for a time, to humble it, their divisions soon give it an opportunity to retrieve its former grandeur.

The czar had had it in his power, from the year 1714, to make a descent upon Sweden; but whether it was that he could not perfectly agree with the kings of Poland, England, Denmark, and Prussia, allies justly jealous of his growing power, or that he did not think his troops as yet sufficiently inured to war to attack in their own territories a people whose very peasants had conquered the flower of the Danish forces, he still put off the execution of this enterprise.

But what had chiefly stopped the progress of his designs, was the want of money. The czar was one of the most powerful monarchs in the universe, but was far from being one of the richest; his revenues, at that time, not exceeding

twenty-four millions of livres ; he had, indeed, discovered some mines of gold, silver, copper, and iron ; but the profits arising from these were still uncertain, and the working of them was very expensive. He had likewise established an extensive commerce ; its beginnings, however, brought him in nothing but hopes. The provinces which he had lately conquered, increased his revenues without augmenting his power and glory. It required a long time to heal the wounds of Livonia ; a country extremely fertile, but desolated by fire, sword, and distemper, and by a war of fifteen years' continuance, destitute of inhabitants, and as yet chargeable to the conqueror. The large fleets he maintained, and the new enterprises which he was daily undertaking, contributed also to exhaust his finances. He had even been reduced to the miserable resource of raising the value of money ; a remedy that can never cure the evils of a state, and is particularly prejudicial to a country which receives more commodities from strangers than it can supply them with.

This was a part of the foundation upon which Gortz had built his scheme of a revolution. He ventured to propose to the king of Sweden to purchase peace from the Russian emperor at any price whatsoever ; representing to him, that the czar was irritated against the kings of Poland and England ; and giving him to understand, that were the forces of Peter Alexiowitz and Charles XII. united, they would strike terror throughout Europe.

There was no other way to accomplish this peace with the czar, than that of yielding up a great part of the provinces which lay to the east and north of the Baltic Sea ; but then he would represent to the king, that in giving up these provinces, which the czar had already possessed himself of, and which it was not in his power to retake, he might have the glory of at once replacing Stanislaus on the throne of Poland, replacing the son of James II. on that of England, and of re-establishing the duke of Holstein in his dominions.

Charles, elated with these great ideas, took no time to

consider of this scheme, but immediately gave his minister a *carte blanche*. Gortz set out from Sweden, provided with a power which authorized him to do every thing without restriction, and constituted him plenipotentiary to any prince with whom he might judge it necessary to negotiate. The first thing he did was to sound the court of Moscow by means of a Scotchman, named Erskine, first physician to the czar, a man entirely devoted to the interest of the pretender; as was, indeed, almost every Scotchman who did not immediately subsist on the favours of the court of London.

The physician represented to Prince Menzikoff the importance and glory of such a project, with all the vivacity of a man who was himself interested in the cause. Prince Menzikoff relished the overtures, and the czar approved them. Instead, therefore, of making a descent on Sweden, as he had agreed on with his allies, he wintered his troops in Mecklenburgh, and went thither himself, under pretence of settling some disputes which were then arising between the duke of Mecklenburgh and the nobility of that country, but, in fact, to pursue his favourite design of obtaining a principality in Germany, and confident of persuading the duke of Mecklenburgh to sell him his sovereignty.

The allies were much irritated at this proceeding; they did not wish to have so formidable a neighbour, who, having once acquired possessions in Germany, might one day cause himself to be elected emperor, and oppress its sovereigns. The more they were enraged, the faster did this great project of Baron de Gortz advance toward success. He negotiated, notwithstanding, with every one of the confederate princes, for the better carrying on his secret intrigues; and the czar continued amusing them all with various hopes. In the mean time, Charles was in Norway, with his brother-in-law, the prince of Hesse, at the head of twenty thousand men: this province was defended only by eleven thousand men, separated in different bodies, whom the king and the prince of Hesse had put to the sword.

Charles advanced as far as Christiania, the capital of this



kingdom ; and in this corner of the globe fortune again began to smile on him ; but he never took sufficient precautions to provide for the subsistence of his troops. A Danish fleet and army were approaching to the defence of Norway ; and Charles, being in want of provisions, was obliged to return to Sweden, there to wait the issue of his minister's mighty projects.

This scheme required at once inviolable secrecy and immense precautions, two things almost incompatible. Gortz even caused an assistance to be sought for in the seas of Asia, which, however odious it seemed, was not, on that account, less useful toward the descent in Scotland, and which, at any rate, would have brought money, men, and vessels into Sweden.

The pirates of every nation, and particularly those of England, having entered into a mutual association, had long infested the seas of Europe and America ; but having been pursued in every part without the least quarter, they had lately retired to the coast of Madagascar, a large island in the east of Africa. These men were all of them desperadoes, and most of them famous for actions which wanted nothing but justice to render them truly heroic. They had, for some time, sought a prince who would receive them under his protection ; but the laws of nations shut all the harbours in the world against them.

As soon as they were informed that Charles was returned to Sweden, they began to hope that that prince, passionately fond of war, forced to carry it on, and in want of both ships and men, would grant them favourable terms : they accordingly sent a deputy to Europe, on board of a Dutch vessel, to make a proposal to Baron de Gortz to receive them into the port of Gottenburgh, whither they offered to repair immediately with sixty ships laden with riches.

The baron prevailed upon the king to agree to this proposition ; and the year following two Swedish gentlemen, one named Cromstrom, and the other Mendal, were sent to finish the negotiation with the corsairs of Madagascar. But

a more honourable and a more powerful support was soon after found in the Cardinal Alberoni, a man of an extraordinary genius, who governed Spain long enough for his own glory, but too short a time for the grandeur of that kingdom.

He entered with ardour into the project of placing the son of James II. on the throne of England. Nevertheless, as he was just entered into the ministry, and had the affairs of Spain to establish before he could think of throwing other kingdoms into confusion, it was not likely that he would be able for many years to set his hand to this great work ; yet, notwithstanding, in less than two years he changed the face of affairs in Spain ; recovered to that kingdom its credit in Europe ; engaged, as is generally imagined, the Turks to attack the emperor of Germany ; and attempted, at the same time, to take away the regency of France from the duke of Orleans, and the crown of Great Britain from King George. So dangerous is even one man, when he is absolute in a powerful state, and possessed of courage and greatness of soul.

Gortz having thus dispersed through the courts of Muscovy and Spain the first sparks of that flame which he meant to kindle, went secretly to France, and from thence to Holland, where he negotiated with many of the pretender's adherents.

He informed himself more particularly of the force, number, and disposition of the malcontents in England, and also of the money they could furnish, and the troops they could raise. The malcontents asked only the assistance of ten thousand men, and represented the revolution as infallible with the assistance of these troops.

Count de Gillembourg, the Swedish ambassador in England, being instructed by Baron de Gortz, had several conferences at London with the principal malcontents : he encouraged them, and promised them every thing they could wish for : the pretender's party went so far as to furnish several considerable sums of money, which Gortz received

in Holland. He negotiated also about the purchase of some ships, and bought six in Brittany, with all kind of arms.

He then sent several officers privately into France, and among others, the Chevalier de Folard, who, having made thirty campaigns in the French armies without any considerable addition to his fortune, had lately offered his services to the king of Sweden, not so much from any interested views, as from a desire to serve under a king who had so astonishing a reputation. The Chevalier de Folard hoped also to prevail on that prince to adopt his new ideas on the art of war, he having studied that art all his life as a philosopher; and he has since given to the world his discoveries in his commentary on Polybius. His ideas were approved of by Charles, who had made war himself in a manner entirely new, and was never guided by custom in any thing; he destined the Chevalier de Folard for one of the instruments he was to make use of in his projected descent upon Scotland. That gentleman executed the secret orders of Baron de Gortz in France. A great number of French, and a still greater number of Irish officers engaged in this conspiracy of a new kind, which was hatching at the same time in England, France, and Muscovy, and the branches of which were secretly extended from one end of Europe to the other.

These preparations were nothing to what Gortz intended to do; but it was a great thing to have begun. The most important point, and without which nothing could succeed, was to complete the peace between the czar and Charles. There remained many difficulties to be removed. Baron Osterman, minister of state in Muscovy, refused, at first, to come into de Gortz's measures; he being as circumspect as the minister of Charles was enterprising. The one slow and regular in his politics, was for suffering every thing to ripen; while the other, of an impatient spirit, was for reaping the harvest as soon as the seed was sown. Osterman was afraid that the emperor, his master, dazzled with the splendour of this enterprise, would grant the Swedes a too



advantageous peace ; he, therefore, delayed the conclusion of it by his obstacles and procrastinations.

Happily for Baron de Gortz, the czar himself arrived in Holland at the beginning of the year 1717. His design was to go from thence into France ; he had not yet seen that celebrated nation, which, for more than a hundred years, has been censured, envied, and imitated, by all its neighbours ; he wanted to gratify there his insatiable curiosity of seeing and learning every thing, and, at the same time, to exercise his politics.

Gortz had two conferences with the emperor at the Hague ; in which he made greater progress than he could have done in six months with the plenipotentiaries. Every thing wore a favourable aspect ; his mighty projects seemed covered by an impenetrable secrecy ; and he flattered himself that Europe would only know them by their being carried into execution. In the mean time, he talked of nothing but of peace at the Hague, and openly declared, that he would always consider the king of England as the pacifier of the north ; and he even pressed, in appearance, the holding of a congress at Brunswick, wherein the interests of Sweden and its enemies might be amicably decided.

The first who discovered these intrigues was the duke of Orleans, regent of France, who had spies in every part of Europe. Men of this description, whose profession it is to tell the secrets of their friends, who subsist by informations, and frequently even by calumnies, were so much increased in France under his government, that one half of the nation were become spies on the other. The duke of Orleans, connected with the king of England by personal engagements, discovered to him the plot that was hatching against him.

At the same time, the Dutch, who took umbrage at the behaviour of de Gortz, communicated their suspicions to the English minister. Gortz and Gillembourg were prosecuting their schemes with great vigour, when they were

both arrested, the one at Deventer in Guelderland, and the other at London.

Gillembourg, the Swedish ambassador, had violated the law of nations, by conspiring against the prince to whom he was delegated, and no scruple was entertained of violating the same law by arresting his person. But all the world was astonished to see the States General, through an unheard of complaisance toward the king of England, imprison Baron de Gortz. They even appointed the Count de Welden to examine him. This formality was only an aggravation of their insult, which, rendered useless, turned out to their own confusion. Gortz asked the Count de Welden if he knew him? "Yes, sir," replied the Dutchman. "Well, then," replied de Gortz, "if you do know me, you know also that I answer to nothing but what I please." The examination was scarcely pushed any further. All the ambassadors, but particularly the Marquis de Monteleon, the Spanish ambassador, protested against the outrage offered to the persons of Gortz and Gillembourg. The Dutch were without excuse. They had not only violated a most sacred law by seizing the prime minister of the king of Sweden, who had formed no plots against them, but they acted directly against the principles of that liberty which had drawn so many foreigners into their country, and which had been the foundation of all their greatness.

With regard to the king of England, he had committed no breach of justice in imprisoning his enemy. He published in his own vindication the letters of Baron de Gortz and Count Gillembourg, which were found among the papers of the latter. The king of Sweden was in Scania at the time when he received these printed letters, together with the news of his two ministers being imprisoned. He asked, with a smile, "if they had printed his letters also?" He immediately gave orders for arresting the English resident at Stockholm, with all his family and domestics. He forbade the Dutch resident the court, and took care to have him strictly watched. Meanwhile, he neither avowed nor

disavowed the proceedings of de Gortz ; being too proud to deny a scheme which he had once approved, and too wise to acknowledge a plot which had been stifled almost in its birth ; he therefore maintained a disdainful silence toward England and Holland.

The czar took a different course. As he was not named, but only obscurely hinted at in the papers of Gortz and Gillembourg, he wrote a long letter to the king of England, full of compliments on the discovery of the conspiracy, and assurance of a sincere friendship. King George received his protestations without believing them, and pretended to be deceived by them. A conspiracy formed by private men, is annihilated the moment it is discovered ; but a conspiracy formed by king's, only gains strength by its being known. The czar arrived at Paris in the month of May, in the same year. He did not totally employ himself in viewing the beauties of art and nature, in visiting the academies, the public libraries, the cabinets of the curious, and the royal palaces ; he proposed a treaty to the duke of Orleans, regent of France, the acceptance of which would have completed the grandeur of Muscovy. His design was to unite himself with the king of Sweden, who would yield to him several large provinces ; to entirely deprive the Danes of the empire of the Baltic Sea ; to weaken the English by a civil war, and to draw all the trade of the north to Russia. He had even some thoughts of setting up Stanislaus afresh against Augustus, so that the fire being kindled on every side, he might have it in his power either to quench or blow it up, as he should find best conducive to his interest. With this view, he proposed to the regent of France to act as a mediator between Sweden and Muscovy, and to make a league offensive and defensive with those two crowns, and that of Spain. This treaty, which appeared so natural, and so advantageous to the several nations concerned, and which placed the balance of power in Europe in their hands, was not accepted by the duke of Orleans. He, at that very time, entered into engagements of a quite contrary nature ; he made a league



with the emperor of Germany, and with George, king of England. Reasons of state had now so altered the views of all the princes of Europe, that the czar was ready to declare against his old ally Augustus, and to espouse the cause of Charles, his mortal enemy; while France, to oblige the Germans and the English, was going to make war upon the grandson of Louis XIV., after having so long supported him against these very enemies, at the expense of so much blood and treasure. All that the czar obtained by indirect measures, was the prevailing upon the regent to interpose his good offices to procure the enlargement of Gortz and Gillembourg. He returned to his own dominions about the end of June, after having shown the French the uncommon sight of an emperor travelling for instruction; but the generality of that people only took notice of his rude, unpolished manners, the result of his bad education; while the legislator, the hero, and the creator of a new nation, entirely escaped their observation.

What the czar sought for in the duke of Orleans, he soon found in Cardinal Alberoni, now become all powerful in Spain. Alberoni wished for nothing so much as the restoration of the pretender; not only as minister of Spain, which had been so ill treated by the English, but as a personal enemy to the duke of Orleans, who was leagued with England against Spain; and lastly, as a priest of that church for the sake of which the pretender's father had so imprudently lost his crown.

The duke of Ormond, as much beloved in England as the duke of Marlborough was admired, had left his country at the accession of King George, and was at that time retired to Madrid. He went from thence, invested with full powers by the king of Spain and the pretender, together with one Jerningham, another native of England, a man of fine address and an enterprising spirit, to meet the czar in his way to Mittau in Courland. He demanded the Princess Anna Petrowna, the czar's daughter, in marriage for the son of James

II.\* hoping that this alliance would more strongly attach the czar to the interests of that unhappy prince. But this proposal, instead of forwarding, had nearly retarded, for a time, the progress of the negotiations. Baron de Gortz, among his other projects, had long destined this princess for the duke of Holstein, to whom, in effect, she was soon after married. As soon as he was informed of the duke of Ormond's proposal, he became jealous of its success, and applied every art to set it aside. He, as well as Count Gillembourg, was set at liberty in the month of August; the king of Sweden not even deigning to make the least excuse to the king of England, nor to show the slightest disapprobation of his minister's conduct.

At the same time the English resident and all his family were released at Stockholm, where they had been treated with much more severity than Gillembourg had been at London.

Gortz having obtained his freedom, behaved like an implacable enemy, having the spirit of revenge joined to the powerful motives by which he had been formerly actuated. He went post to the czar, and, by his artful insinuations, obtained a greater ascendancy over that prince than ever. He assured him directly that in less than three months he would, in conjunction with a single plenipotentiary from Russia, remove every obstacle that retarded the conclusion of a peace with Sweden; and taking a map in his hand which had been drawn by the czar himself, he drew a line from Wiburg all the way to the Frozen Sea, running along the Lake Ladoga, and undertook to persuade his master to give up all the country lying to the eastward of that line, as well as Carelia, In-

\* The Cardinal Alberoni confirms the truth of all these particulars in a letter of thanks to the author. M. Norberg, whose ignorance of the affairs of Europe can only be equalled by the poverty of his genius, alleges, that the duke of Ormond did not quit England upon the accession of George I., but immediately after the death of Queen Anne; as if George I. had not been the immediate successor of that queen.

gria, and Livonia; after that he threw out propositions for a marriage between his czarish majesty's daughter and the duke of Holstein, flattering the czar that the duke might be prevailed upon to yield up his dominions for an equivalent, by which means he would become a member of the empire, showing him afar off the imperial crown, whether it were to be worn by himself or by one of his descendants. He thus flattered the ambitious views of the Russian monarch, and prevented the pretender from marrying the czarian princess, while he opened to him the road into England, and accomplished all his own projects at once.

The czar named the Isle of Alan for holding a conference between Osterman, his minister of state, and Baron de Gortz. The duke of Ormond was desired to return to Spain, that the czar might not give too great cause of offence to the English, to whom he had no intention of giving umbrage till he should be ready to make the projected invasion; Jerningham, the duke's confidant, who was properly instructed, was allowed to stay at Petersburg, where he lived with so much precaution, that he never went abroad but in the night time, nor ever conversed with any of the czar's ministers, except in the disguise of a peasant or Tartar.

As soon as the duke of Ormond departed, the czar acquainted the king of England with the high compliment he had paid him in dismissing the greatest man in the pretender's faction; and Baron de Gortz, full of hope, returned to Sweden.

He found his master at the head of thirty-five thousand regular troops, and all the coasts lined with the militia. The king wanted nothing but money; credit, as well at home as abroad, being entirely exhausted. France, which had furnished him with some supplies during the last years of Louis XIV. refused to contribute any more under the regency of the duke of Orleans, who was governed by quite contrary maxims. Spain promised him some remittances; but was not as yet able to furnish much. De Gortz at this time put



into execution, in its full extent, a scheme which he formerly tried before his journey to France and Holland ; this was, to give to copper the value of silver ; so that a piece of copper whose intrinsic value was only a half-penny, should, when stamped with the king's mark, pass for forty pence ; in the same manner as the governors of besieged towns frequently pay the soldiers and citizens in leather money, in hopes of being one day able to reimburse them in real coin. This fictitious kind of money, invented by necessity, and to which nothing can give a durable credit but the good faith of government, resembles bills of exchange, the imaginary value of which may easily exceed the real funds of a state.

These resources are of great use in a free country ; they have sometimes saved a republic, but almost certainly ruin a monarchy ; for the people soon tiring of confidence, the minister is reduced to break his faith ; this ideal coin is multiplied to excess ; and individuals bury the specie they possess, and the whole machine is destroyed, with a confusion which is often accompanied by the greatest disasters. This was what happened to the kingdom of Sweden.

Baron de Gortz at first issued out his new coin with discretion ; but, by the rapidity of the movement which he could no longer govern, he was in a little time hurried beyond the limits which he had originally prescribed. All kinds of merchandize and provisions having risen to an immoderate price, he was obliged to increase the quantity of the copper coin. But the more it was increased, the less was its value ; at last, Sweden, overrun by this false money, set up a general cry against de Gortz. The people, who had always beheld their sovereign with veneration, could not find in their hearts to hate him, and therefore made the weight of their resentment fall on a minister, who, as he was a foreigner, and chief director of the finances, was doubly certain of the public hatred.

A tax which he wanted to lay on the clergy, rendered him totally detestable to the nation ; the priests, who too often join their own cause to that of Heaven, publicly pronounced

him an atheist, because he demanded their money. Some of the new coin being stamped with the figures of the heathen gods, they took this occasion to call those pieces *le Dieux du Baron de Gortz*, the Gods of Baron de Gortz.

To this public hatred were joined the jealousies of the ministers; the more implacable, as they were at that time without power to affect him. The king's sister, and the prince her husband, feared him as a man attached by his birth to the duke of Holstein, and who might one day be able to place the crown of Sweden on his head. He gained no one's affections in the kingdom but Charles's; yet this general aversion served only to confirm the friendship of the king, whose opinions were always strengthened by contradictions. He now placed a confidence in the baron bordering on submission; he gave him an absolute power in the interior government of the kingdom; and committed to his care, without the least reserve, whatever related to the negotiations with the czar, recommending to him, above all things, to hasten the conferences that were to be held in the Isle of Alan.

In effect, Gortz had no sooner finished the arrangement of the finances at Stockholm which demanded his presence, than he set out to conclude with the czar's minister the grand scheme he had projected.

The following are the preliminary conditions of that alliance, which was wholly to have changed the face of affairs in Europe; they were found among de Gortz's papers after his death.

The czar was to keep the whole of Livonia and part of Ingria and Carelia, and to restore the rest to Sweden; he was to join Charles XII. in the design to re-establish Stanislaus on the throne of Poland, and was to engage to enter that country with eighty thousand Russians to dethrone Augustus, the very king in whose defence he had waged a war of ten years' continuance. He was also to furnish the king of Sweden with a sufficient number of ships to transport ten thousand Swedes to England, and thirty thousand to Ger-

many. The united forces of Peter and Charles were to attack the king of England in his states of Hanover, and particularly in Bremen and Verdun; the same troops would have served to restore the duke of Holstein, and compelled the king of Prussia to accept a treaty by which he would have been deprived of part of those territories which he had formerly taken.

From this time Charles assumed as lofty airs as if his victorious troops, reinforced by those of the czar, had already executed every thing they intended. He haughtily demanded of the emperor of Germany to conclude the treaty of Altranstad. The court of Vienna scarcely deigned to give an answer to the proposal of a prince from whom she thought she had nothing to fear.

The king of Poland did not possess so much confidence: he saw the clouds gathering on every side. The Polish nobility had formed a confederacy against him; and since his restoration he had continually been engaged either in wars or treaties with his subjects. The czar, a dangerous mediator, had a hundred gallies near Dantzic, and forty thousand men on the frontiers of Poland. All the North was filled with jealousy and apprehension. Fleming, the most distrustful of men, and himself the most to be distrusted by the neighbouring powers, was the first who suspected the designs of the czar and the king of Sweden in favour of Stanislaus. He determined, therefore, to have him seized in the duchy of Deux Points, as James Sobiesky had formerly been in Silesia. A Frenchman, one of those restless and enterprising spirits who wander into foreign parts to try their fortunes, had lately brought a small number of his countrymen, bold and daring, like himself, into the service of the king of Poland. He communicated a project to Fleming, by which he engaged, with thirty French officers, to seize Stanislaus in his own palace, and carry him a prisoner to Dresden. The project was approved. Such enterprises were then very common. Some of those fellows who are called bravoës in Italy, had performed similar acts in the



Milanese during the last war between France and Germany. After that time, several French refugees in Holland had ventured to penetrate as far as Versailles, in order to carry off the dauphin; and had actually seized the person of the first equerry, almost under the windows of the castle where Louis XIV. resided.

Saissan prepared his men and relays of post-horses in order to seize and carry off Stanislaus. The enterprise was discovered the night before it was to have been carried into execution. Several of them made their escape, and the rest were taken prisoners. They had no right to expect to be treated as prisoners of war, but rather as a banditti. Stanislaus, however, instead of punishing them, contented himself with reproaching them with their baseness, and even that he did in terms replete with humanity; he even gave them money to conduct them back to Poland, and by this generous behaviour plainly showed that his rival Augustus had but too much reason to fear him.\*

In the mean time, Charles departed a second time for the conquest of Norway, in the month of October, 1718. He had so well taken all his measures, that he hoped in six months time to make himself master of that kingdom. He rather chose to go and conquer rocks amidst ice and snow, in the depth of winter, which kills the animals even in Sweden, where the air is less cold, than to retake his beautiful provinces in Germany from the hands of his enemies. These he expected he should soon be able to recover in consequence of his alliance with the czar; and his vanity, besides, was more flattered at ravishing a kingdom from his victorious enemy.

At the mouth of the river Tistendall, near the channel of Denmark, and between the towns of Bahus and Anslo stands Frederickshall, a place of great strength and importance, and considered as the key of the kingdom. Charles formed

\* Here M. Norberg accuses the author of want of respect to crowned heads; as if this faithful account contained in it any thing injurious, or as if we were obliged to relate aught but truth of departed kings.

the siege of this place in the month of December. The soldiers, benumbed with cold, could scarcely turn up the earth, which was so much hardened by the frost, that it was almost as difficult to pierce it as if they had been opening trenches in a rock; yet the Swedes could not be disheartened, while they saw their king at their head, who partook of all their fatigues. Charles had never before undergone so many hardships. His constitution, hardened by eighteen years of severe labours, was fortified to such a degree, that he slept in the open field in Norway in the midst of winter, either on a truss of straw or a plank, covered only with a cloak, without the least prejudice to his health.

Several of the soldiers dropped down dead at their posts, and the rest were almost frozen to death; yet as they saw their king suffering like themselves, they did not dare to make the least complaint. Having heard, some time before this expedition, of a certain woman in Scania, called Joan Dotter, who had lived for several months without taking any other nourishment than water; he, who had studied all his life to support the most extreme rigours that human nature could bear, resolved to try how long he could fast without being worn out. He passed five whole days without eating or drinking; and on the morning of the sixth rode two leagues, and then alighted at the tent of the prince of Hesse, his brother-in-law, where he eat heartily, without feeling the least inconvenience from his abstinence of five days, or from the plentiful meal which immediately succeeded.\*

With this body of iron, governed by a soul so enterprising and inflexible in every situation he was reduced to, he could not fail to be formidable to all his neighbours.

On the 11th of December, being St. Andrew's day, he went at nine in the evening to visit the trenches; and not finding the parallel so far advanced as he expected, appeared very

\* Norberg pretends, that it was to cure a pain in his breast, that Charles tried this strange abstinence. Confessor Norberg is surely a bad physician

much displeased. M. Megret, a French engineer, who conducted the siege, assured him that the place could be taken in eight days. "We shall see," said the king, and went on with the engineer to survey the works. He stopped at a place where a branch of the trenches formed an angle with the parallel; and kneeling on the inner talus, and resting his elbow on the parapet, continued in that posture for some time, to view the men, who were carrying on the trenches by star-light.

The least circumstances become important, when they relate to the death of such a man as Charles XII. I must, therefore, say, that the whole of the conversation reported by so many writers to have passed between the king and Megret, the engineer, is absolutely false. This is what I know to be the real truth of the matter.

Almost half of the king's body was exposed to a battery of cannon, pointed directly against the angle where he was: there was no one near his person at this time but two Frenchmen; one of whom was M. Siquier, his aid-de-camp, a man of courage and conduct, who had entered into his service in Turkey, and who was particularly attached to the prince of Hesse; and the other was this engineer. The cannon fired upon them, but the king, being the least covered by the parapet, was the most exposed. At some distance behind them was Count Swerin, who commanded in the trenches. Count Posse, a captain of the guards, and an aid-de-camp named Kulbert, were receiving orders from him. Siquier and Megret saw the king the moment he fell, which he did upon the parapet, with a deep sigh. They immediately ran to him: he was already dead. A ball of half a pound weight had struck him on the right temple, and made a hole sufficient to receive three fingers at once; his head was reclined on the parapet, his left eye beat in, and the right one entirely out of its socket. The instant of his wound had been that of his death; but he had had the force, whilst expiring in so sudden a manner, to place by a natural movement his hand upon the hilt of his sword, and he remained in that attitude.



At the sight of this spectacle, Megret, a man of peculiar and callous disposition, said nothing but these words, "There! the play is over; let us be gone." Siquier ran immediately to inform Count Swerin. They all agreed to conceal the news of his death from the soldiers, till they could acquaint the prince of Hesse with it. They wrapt up the body in a gray cloak. Siquier put his hat and wig on the king's head; and in this condition they carried Charles, under the name of one Captain Carlberg, through the midst of his troops, who saw their dead king pass them, without ever dreaming it was him.

The prince instantly gave orders that no one should go out of the camp, and that all the passes to Sweden should be strictly guarded, that he might have time to take the necessary measures for placing the crown on his wife's head, and excluding the duke of Holstein, who might lay claim to it.

Thus fell Charles XII. king of Sweden, at the age of thirty-six years and a half, after having experienced whatever is most brilliant in prosperity, and all that is most poignant in adversity, without having been enervated by the one, or having wavered, though but for a moment, with the other. Almost all his actions, even those of his private life, bordered on the marvellous. He is perhaps the only one of all mankind, and hitherto the only one among kings, who has lived without a single frailty. He carried all the virtues of heroes to an excess, at which they are as dangerous as their opposite vices. His resolution, hardened into obstinacy, occasioned his misfortunes in the Ukraine, and detained him five years in Turkey; his liberality, degenerating into profusion, ruined Sweden; his courage, extending even to rashness, was the cause of his death; his justice has sometimes extended to cruelty; and during the last years of his reign, the means he employed to support his authority differed little from tyranny. His great qualities, any one of which would have been sufficient to have immortalized another prince, proved the misfortune of his country. He never was the

aggressor; yet in taking vengeance he was more implacable than prudent. He was the first man who ever aspired to the title of conqueror, without the least desire of enlarging his own dominions; and whose only end in subduing kingdoms, was to have the pleasure of giving them away. His passion for glory, for war, and revenge, prevented him from being a good politician; a quality without which the world had never before seen any one a conqueror. Before a battle, and after a victory, he was modest and humble; and after a defeat, firm and undaunted; inflexible toward others as well as toward himself, rating at nothing the fatigues and lives of his subjects any more than his own; rather an extraordinary than a great man, and more worthy to be admired than imitated. His life ought to be a lesson to kings, how much a pacific and happy government is preferable to so much glory.

Charles XII. was of a tall stature, with a noble air; he had a fine forehead, large blue eyes, full of sweetness, and a handsome nose; but the lower part of his face was disagreeable, and too often disfigured by a frequent laugh, at which time he scarce opened his lips; and he had scarce any beard or hair. He spoke very little, and frequently only answered people with that laugh which was habitual to him. With the inflexible obstinacy of his temper, he always retained that timidity which goes by the name of false modesty. He would have been embarrassed in a conversation, because, having given up his time entirely to war and action, he had no knowledge of society. Till the time of his residence among the Turks, which furnished him with a good deal of leisure, he had read nothing but Cæsar's Commentaries and the History of Alexander; yet he had written some reflections on the art of war, and particularly on his own campaigns from 1700 to 1709. This he owed to the Chevalier de Folard, but said that the manuscript had been lost in the unfortunate battle of Pultowa. Some people would describe Charles as a good mathematician: he possessed, no doubt, a great degree of penetration, but the ar-

guments they make use of to prove his knowledge in mathematics, are by no means conclusive; he wanted to alter the method of counting by tens, and proposed to substitute in its place the number 64, because that number contains both a cube and a square, and being divided by two is reducible to a unit. This only proves that he delighted in every thing extraordinary and difficult.

With regard to his religion, though the sentiments of a prince ought to have no influence on other men, and though the opinion of a monarch so illiterate as Charles can be of little consequence in these matters, yet it is necessary to gratify, in this as well as in every other particular, the curiosity of mankind, who are anxious to know whatever relates to this prince. I am informed by the gentleman who furnished me with the greatest part of the materials which compose this history, that Charles was a serious Lutheran until the year 1707. He then happened to see at Leipsic the famous philosopher, M. Leibnitz, who thought and spoke freely, and had already instilled his sentiments into more princes than one. I cannot believe, as it is reported, that Charles conceived an indifference for Lutheranism from the conversation of this philosopher, who never had the honour to talk with him above a quarter of an hour; but M. Fabricius, who lived with him in great familiarity for seven years successively, told me, Charles having seen, during his residence among the Turks, such an infinite variety of religions, his indifference became greater. La Mottray, in his voyages, confirms this idea. The same, too, is the opinion of the Count de Croissy, who hath several times told me, that of all his old principles, Charles retained none but that of absolute predestination, a doctrine that favoured his courage, and justified his temerity. The czar held the same opinion with regard to fate and religion; but talked of these subjects more frequently, as indeed he did of every thing else with his favourites, with much familiarity; for he had the advantage over Charles, both in the study of philosophy and the gift of eloquence.



Here I cannot help taking notice of a calumny that is too often raised at the death of princes by the malicious, and too readily believed by the credulous, that their death is always owing to poison or assassination. A report had spread through Germany, that M. Siquier himself had killed the king of Sweden. That brave officer was long grieved at this injurious aspersion; and one day talking to me on the subject, used the following expression: "I might have killed the king of Sweden, but such was my respect for that hero, that had I conceived the thought, I could not have had the courage to carry it into execution."

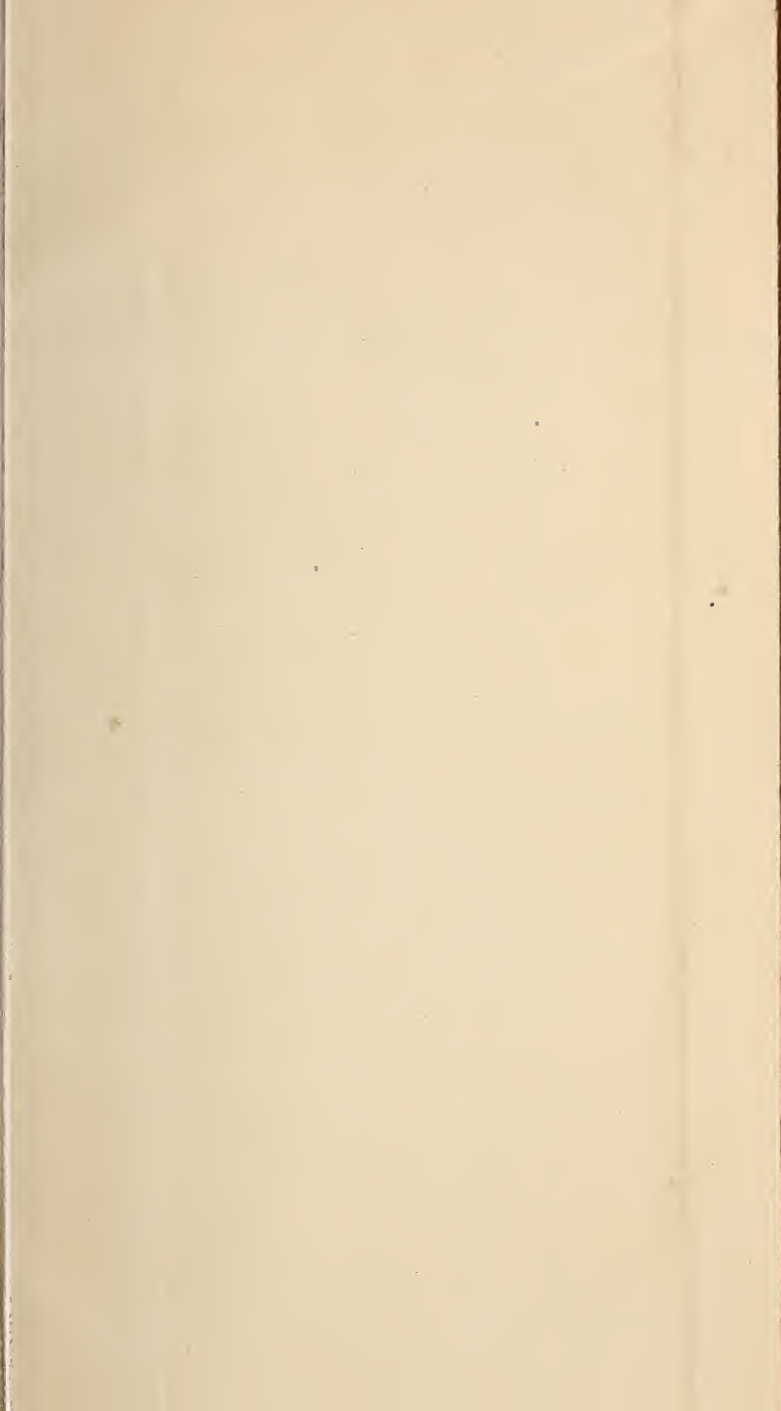
I know very well that Siquier himself gave occasion for this heavy accusation, which, even to this day, is believed by a part of Sweden; he told me that during a raging fever at Stockholm, he had cried out that he had killed the king of Sweden; and that in the height of his frenzy he even opened the window, and publicly begged pardon for the regicide. When he was acquainted, in the course of his recovery, with what he had said in his illness, he was ready to die with grief. This anecdote I did not choose to reveal during his life time. I saw him a little time before his death, and I think I can safely affirm, that, so far from killing Charles XII., he would have suffered a thousand deaths could he have saved his life. Had he been guilty of such a crime, it must have been to have served some prince, who, no doubt, would have liberally rewarded him; but he died in France extremely poor, and even stood in need of assistance from myself. If these reasons are not sufficient, let it be considered, that the ball by which Charles fell could not enter into a pistol, and that Siquier could not have executed this detestable crime but with a pistol concealed under his clothes.

After the death of the king, the siege of Frederickshall was raised; every thing was changed in the government. The Swedes, more oppressed than flattered by the glory of their prince, lost no time in concluding a peace with their enemies, and suppressing that absolute power which Baron

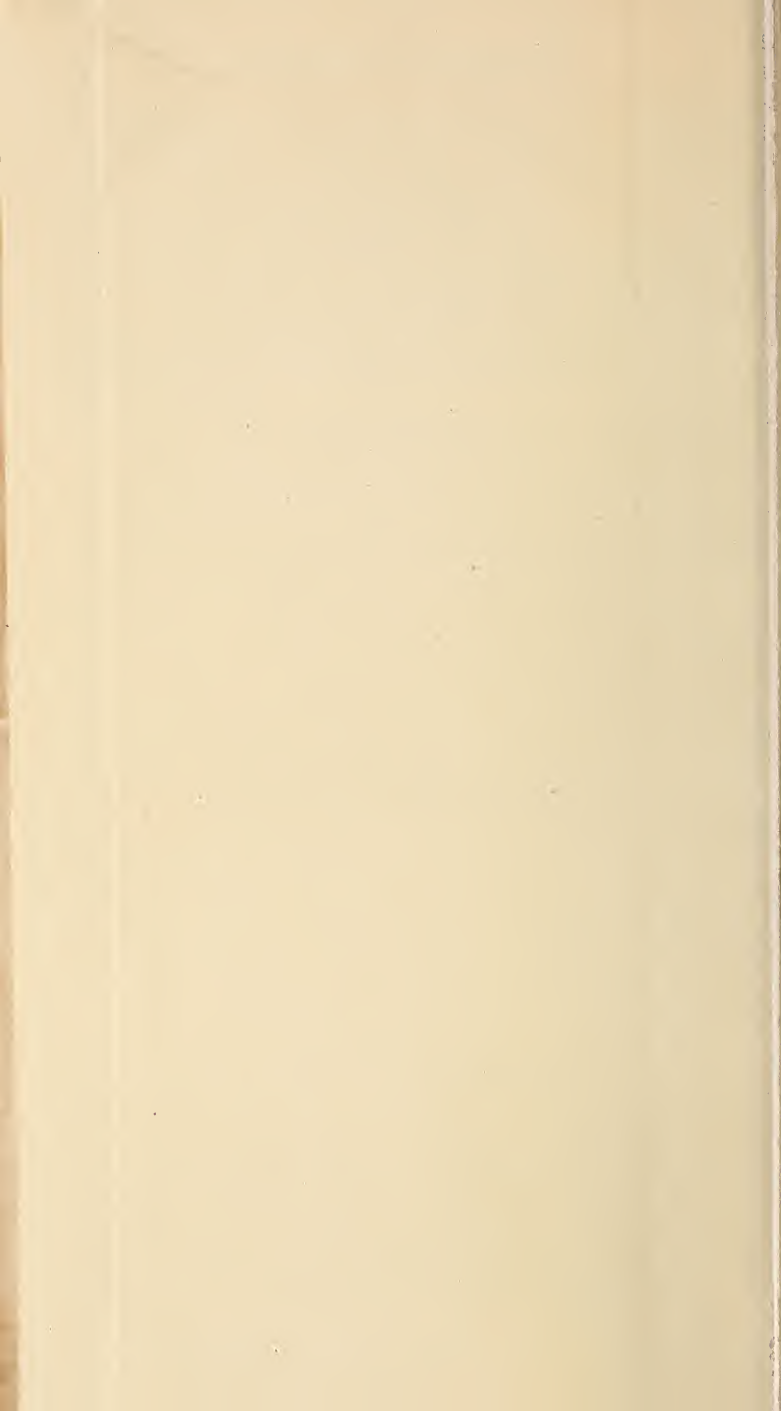
de Gortz had made them feel to excess. The states freely elected the sister of Charles XII. for their queen, and obliged her, by a solemn act, to renounce all hereditary right to the crown, in order that she should only hold it by the suffrages of the nation. She promised, with reiterated oaths, that she would never attempt to restore arbitrary authority, and at last, sacrificing the love of royalty to conjugal affection, yielded the crown to her husband, and engaged the states to elect that prince, who mounted the throne on the same conditions as herself.

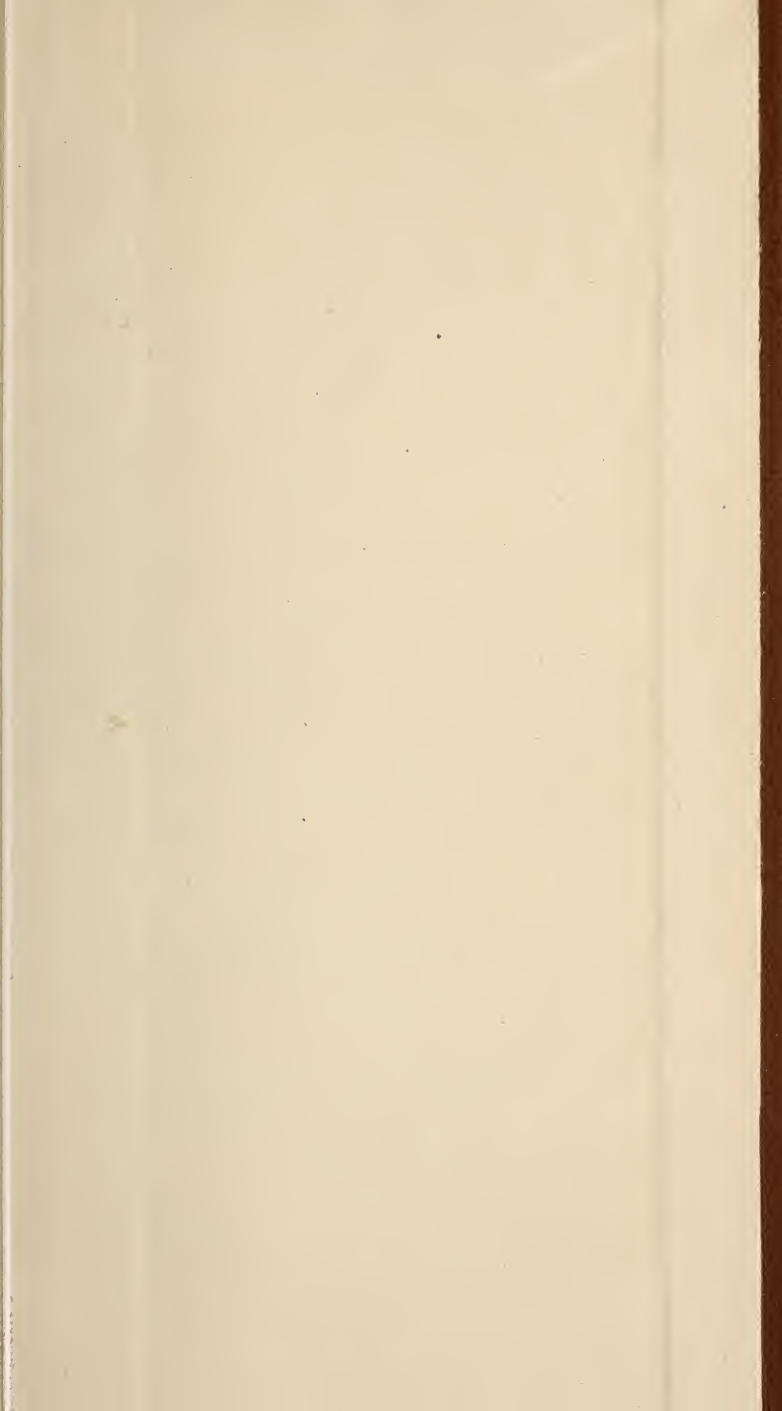
The Baron de Gortz, being seized instantly after the death of Charles, was condemned by the senate of Stockholm to have his head cut off at the foot of the gallows of the town; an example of revenge, perhaps, rather than of justice, and a cruel insult to the memory of a king whom Sweden still admires.

**FINIS.**









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